AN ESSAY ON THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ADDRESSED TO THE
Inhabitants of a populous Pariſh near London.

BY A LAYMAN,
Living in the ſaid Pariſh.

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MY DEAR NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS.

AFTER the many pious and uſeful Treatiſes that have been written upon the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it may appear unneceſſary, if not preſumptuous, to attempt any Thing new upon that Subject; eſpecially to you of this Pariſh, who have ſo often heard it properly explained, and the Obligations to it excellently enforced by our very worthy Miniſter. Yet it is Matter of great Concern to me to obſerve how much this Duty is in general neglected; not only by the profane and irreligious (who indeed ought not to join in this or any other Part of public Worſhip) but by many, very many, honeſt well-diſpoſed Chriſtians, who regularly attend the common Service of the Church, but as conſtantly turn their Backs on this holy Ordinance, which is the moſt important and beneficial of all. Much indeed has been written on this Subject—perhaps a great deal too much; and ſometimes, I fear, not in ſo plain and clear a Manner as it ought. Difficulties have been ſtarted, and long Forms of Preparation preſcribed, by devout but ill-judging Writers, without any Warrant from Scripture; which have only ſerved to perplex the Minds of the weak and ſcrupulous, and to deter them from joining in a neceſſary Part of Chriſtian Worſhip. Something therefore ſeems to be ſtill wanting, in order to clear

up the Miſtakes, and remove the Doubts and Fears, of all ſuch as are ſincerely deſirous of doing their Duty, and who really do it in other Reſpects to the beſt of their Abilities, and yet are ſhamefully neglectful of this very material Part of it. With this View I have undertaken the following Eſſay; not to make a Shew of my Learning and Abilities, (which, in Truth, I have no Reaſon to boaſt of) but purely from a Deſire of doing ſome little Good in the Pariſh where I live, and whoſe Welfare I have entirely at Heart. You muſt not therefore expect from me any Thing curious or learned; but a plain, eaſy Diſcourſe, ſuited to every one's Capacity. Scripture, and plain Reaſoning from Scripture, is what I here preſent you with. Let me only intreat you to lay aſide all Prejudices, and to give it a fair, impartial, and attentive Reading. And may God grant it to have the deſired Effect, in convincing you of your Duty, removing your Fears and Scruples, and ſo bringing you to a conſtant and devout Attendance at his holy Table; to his Honour and Glory, and your own unſpeakable Comfort; for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer! So prays

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Your ſincere Well-Wiſher and Friend,

Oct. 23, 1730. THE AUTHOR.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

A Very worthy Clergyman in this Neighbourhood having thought fit to diſperſe this little Eſſay among his Pariſhioners, with an admirable *Preface* of his own prefixed to it; I have, with his Leave, taken the following Extract from it, which I moſt earneſtly recommend to your ſerious Peruſal.

After having lamented the great Neglect of what He juſtly calls "a very important and neceſſary "Chriſtian Duty," the Receiving the holy Sacrament, he then proceeds——

"The Reaſon of this ſtrange Neglect is a natu-"ral Subject of Conſideration and Inquiry to every "Perſon, who is convinced of the Neceſſity, and "therefore regular in the Performance, of this Du-"ty. I apprehend that it is owing principally to "Indifference with reſpect to Religion in general, "and to a Want of proper Regard to the Doctrines "and the Privileges of the Chriſtian Religion in par-"ticular. If Men would give themſelves any Con-"cern about Religion, and duly conſider that to "the *Death of Jeſus Chriſt on the Croſs* they are in-"debted for the Hopes which they entertain of "Life in another World, for the Poſſibility of "the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, and of God's Ac-"ceptance of their imperfect Endeavours in the "Ways of Virtue; that, therefore, they are "indebted to it for all their preſent Comfort, "and all their future Happineſs——it is rea-"ſonable to think, that they would eagerly em-"brace every poſſible Method of expreſſing their "*Reliance on the Death of Chriſt*, and their *Gra-*

"*titude*

" *titude* for ſuch an amazing Inſtance of Mercy,
" and that they would wiſh for Opportunities of
" ſhewing that they *glory in his Croſs*. Now it is
" obvious to every one, who has duly conſidered the
" Subject, that a *Reliance*, a *Senſe of Gratitude* and a
" *Glorying*, on Account of the Death of Chriſt, muſt
" include of neceſſity a Compliance with *that Inſti-*
" *tution, which Chriſt himſelf appointed in particular*
" *Remembrance of his Death*. So that thoſe, who re-
" fuſe to comply with it, muſt allow me to ſuppoſe,
" either that they give themſelves no Concern
" about Religion at all — in which Caſe they con-
" fine their Regard and Hopes to the poor Satisfac-
" tions of the preſent ſhort Life, in Preference to
" the complete Happineſs of an Eternity, which is
" offered to them; or elſe, that they live in a
" State of wilful Diſobedience to the Command of
" HIM, whom they pretend to acknowledge, and
" preſume to call, their *Saviour* and *Lord*—in which
" Caſe they evidently hazard the Forfeiture of all
" the Advantages which he came from Heaven to
" procure for them.

" Various Excuſes have been urged, even by ſome
" well-meaning Perſons, for their not complying with
" this Duty. But ſurely there is an obvious Ab-
" ſurdity in the very *Notion* of an *Excuſe for* neg-
" lecting to perform a poſitive Duty; eſpecially
" if the Neglect is continued, and the Excuſe re-
" peated. It is not therefore wonderful that all
" the Excuſes which have ever been urged upon the
" Subject ſhould be frivolous and unſatisfactory.

" Some of the moſt common are very properly
" anſwered in this little Book: if others ſhould ariſe
" in your Minds, which you are not able to anſwer
" yourſelves, *remember* that you have it in your
" Power,

" Power, and are directed in one of the Exhorta-
" tions on this Subject in your Common Prayer
" Book, to 'apply to your own, or to ſome other,
" Miniſter of God's Word, for Counſel and Ad-
" vice;' — *remember* always *the abſolute Neceſſity of*
" *the Duty*, at the ſame Time that any Scruples re-
" lating to it occur to you; this will make you
" ſenſible that it ought to be your principal Concern
" to *remove them:* and BE ASSURED that you can
" never give a greater Satisfaction to any Chriſtian
" Miniſter, than when you apply to him for his Ad-
" vice and Aſſiſtance, in any Points relating to your
" Duty as Chriſtians.

" *No ſufficient Excuſe*, believe me, can be offered for
" your Omiſſion of this Duty, but one of theſe —
" either that you are *living in a State of wilful Sin* —
" or that *you are ignorant* of the Reaſon, the Na-
" ture, and the Neceſſity of the Duty—that is, that
" you are ignorant of the firſt Principles—of the
" very Foundation—of the Religion which you pro-
" feſs. And can you have any Degree of rational
" Comfort, while you continue in either of theſe
" Situations?

" Do you wiſh to be conſidered by others, or can you
" be ſatisfied in *conſidering your ſelves*, as living in a *State*
" *of Sin?* You who are Servants, or who labour for
" your daily Bread, or who are engaged in any inferior
" Occupation in this Place (to whom I mean par-
" ticularly to addreſs this *Word of Exhortation*) YOU
" ALL know how neceſſary the Appearance of ſome
" Regard to Religion is to your being maintained,
" employed, and truſted, in your ſeveral Stations.
" But if the *Reputation* of *Honeſty*, and other Vir-
" tues, if the *Appearance* of a Regard to Religion is
" neceſſary to recommend you to *Men*, and to pro-

" mote

" mote your *worldly* Intereſts, reflect that the *Reality*
" alone can avail you with *God*, and advance your
" Intereſts in a future Life—thoſe Intereſts which
" are infinitely more important than all the Ad-
" vantages and Satisfactions which you can poſ-
" ſibly receive in the preſent. If you have therefore
" any true Concern for your Condition in another
" Life, you *muſt quit your Sins*: and every Hour's De-
" lay increaſes the Strength and Number of your
" Sins, and ſhortens that Space of Life, in which you
" are to *work out your Salvation*.

" If you are ignorant of the Reaſons, the Nature,
" and the Neceſſity of the Duty, can you think ſuch
" Ignorance excuſable? or the Neglect of any Means
" of Information juſtifiable? In this Book I apprehend
" that you will find every neceſſary Information on
" the Subject; but if it ſhould not fully ſatisfy you,
" and you have not profited by the public Inſtruc-
" tions which you have ever received, you may at
" any Time receive the private Inſtruction of your
" Miniſter. And let me intreat you, not to ſuffer
" a *falſe Shame* of owning your Ignorance to prevent
" you from endeavouring to acquire that Know-
" ledge which is neceſſary for ſecuring your ever-
" laſting Happineſs. There is no Perſon, in any
" Condition whatever, who has not ſufficient Time,
" and ſufficient Capacity, if he will make proper
" Uſe of them, for attaining to every *neceſſary* Part
" of Chriſtian Knowledge. You, eſpecially, who
" are Servants, or much the greateſt Number of
" you, know that you have many leiſure Hours,
" which you may employ to ſuch Advantage. How
" much, therefore, will you have to anſwer for, if
" you do not ſo employ them! and how great Ha-
" zard will you run of *very much miſemploying* them!

" Your

" Your continuing in Ignorance and Sin is there-
" fore inexcuſable in itſelf. And it is not more
" abſurd to truſt to the uncertain and hazardous
" Efforts of a late Repentance for the Forgiveneſs
" of your Sins, than to entertain a Notion, that it
" will be ſufficient for you *once, at the End of your*
" *Lives*, to partake of that Sacrament, which de-
" mands your *frequent* Attendance, and was ap-
" pointed to be one of the Means of your *continual*
" Comfort."

He now mentions a very laudable Cuſtom he has introduced into his Pariſh, of a monthly Communion at eight in the Morning, for the Accommodation of ſuch well-diſpoſed Perſons as cannot attend at the uſual Hour; and then ſays——

" A Deſire of increaſing the Number of Communi-
" cants, *at all Times*, has been the Motive of my thus
" addreſſing you, and recommending this Book to
" your ſerious Notice; in which I am particularly
" earneſt, becauſe I conſider, on the one Hand, an
" Attendance on this Sacrament to be the ſtrongeſt
" outward Proof that you can exhibit, in *any one In-*
" *ſtance*, that you truly believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and
" wiſh to act agreeably to his Will—and I cannot
" help fearing, on the other Hand, that a Refuſal to
" attend on it is an Intimation, that you are not un-
" der the due Influence of his Goſpel."

AN

ERRATA.

Page 15. Line 23. For *Humanity*, read *Humility*.
Page 19. Line 8. For *it's oppoſite Pride*, read *it's Oppoſite, Pride*.

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AN ESSAY ON THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE LORD's SUPPER.

CHAP. I.

On the Nature, End, and Design of the Holy Communion.

WE read in Moſes's Account of the Creation, that *God created Man in his own Image*, Gen. i. 27. by which we are to underſtand, that our firſt Parents, Adam and Eve, were created holy and upright, with a perfect Knowledge of their Duty, and a Power, through the divine Bleſſing, to perform it. In this Condition they were placed in Paradiſe, in a State of Trial, and, no Doubt, in the full Enjoyment of Comfort, Peace, and Happineſs; with a Promiſe of immortal Life, if they ſhould love, honour,

and obey their great Creator, but with an expreſs Threatening of Death and Miſery, in caſe of their Diſobedience.

In the Midſt of that Plenty of every thing fit for their Uſe, wherewith God had bleſſed them, one Tree only was reſerved, whereof they were forbidden to eat, as a Teſt or Trial of their Obedience. Of this fatal Fruit the Woman (ſeduced by the Devil in the Form of a Serpent) taſted, and then gave thereof to her Huſband, and *he did eat.* Thus did they both wilfully tranſgreſs a plain and poſitive Command of their Maker, and by ſo doing incurred his moſt juſt Diſpleaſure, forfeited all Title to his future Favour, and ſubjected themſelves to that Sentence of Death, and all its dreadful Conſequences, with which they had been threatened. Thus *Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin.* Hence human Nature became polluted and depraved; and from this Fall of our firſt Parents we may date all that Wickedneſs and Corruption, which we read, and hear of, and ſee, in the World, and which we cannot but feel and lament in ourſelves. Accordingly we are told, that *Adam begat a Son in his* own *Likeneſs, after* his *Image*, Gen. v. 3. that is, with the ſame corrupt ſinful Nature as his own was now become; and in *his Image*,

as

as directly oppoſite and contrary to that *Image* of *God*, wherein he was at firſt created.

How wretched and deplorable a State was Man now reduced to! To live only to ſin, and ſuffer the juſt Reward of Sin, Death and Miſery. Dreadful indeed! Had not our gracious and merciful God provided a Remedy, and, in Pity to loſt Mankind, appointed *the Seed of the Woman to bruiſe the Serpent's Head.* Under this Figure was our bleſſed Redeemer (the Son of God, the *Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World)* promiſed to Adam and his Poſterity, to be offered in due Time as a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. By virtue of which Sacrifice all Men, from the Beginning to the End of all things, are entitled to Pardon, and aſſured of eternal Happineſs in the Life to come, on Condition of their Repentance, Faith, and Obedience—*as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* Now in order to imprint in the Minds of our firſt Parents, and of their Poſterity after them, a deep Senſe of their own Unworthineſs and of God's great Goodneſs, and to keep up a lively Faith in the promiſed Redeemer, Sacrifices were appointed, and continued ever after until the Coming of Chriſt, as a principal Part of religious Worſhip. By theſe every faithful Servant of God was inſtructed

in the heinous Nature of Sin, and the Neceſſity of an Atonement for it: which Atonement was to be made, not by any Virtue or Efficacy in the Sacrifices themſelves, but only by that all-ſufficient Sacrifice of Chriſt upon the Croſs, which theſe were deſigned to foreſhew and repreſent. For the ſame Reaſon, ſince the Coming of our bleſſed Saviour, we Chriſtians are commanded to keep up a conſtant and grateful Remembrance of what he has done and ſuffered for us, in the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Bread which we break is to remind us of his Body having been broken or crucified for us; and the Wine poured out to repreſent to us his moſt precious Blood, which was ſhed for our Redemption, and to make an Atonement for our Sins. And this is undoubtedly the original and principal Deſign of the holy Sacrament, *viz.* to be a ſtanding Memorial and Repreſentation of our Lord's Death and Sufferings, unto the End of the World; *For*, as St. Paul ſays, *as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's Death, 'till he come:* That is, 'till his ſecond Coming to Judgment.

But 2*dly*, it may be conſidered as a Sign or Token of preſent Graces; that is, of the gracious Influences of the Holy Spirit, which our Saviour has promiſed to all ſuch as ſhall

ſeek

ſeek for them by fervent Prayer, and the diligent Uſe of this Sacrament. Of ourſelves we are utterly unable to pleaſe God. *In our Fleſh*, the Scripture tells us, *dwelleth no good thing*; that is, in our natural fallen State we have no Power to do what is good, or avoid what is evil; but *are dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; yet the ſame Scripture aſſures us, that *we can do all things thro' Chriſt, that ſtrengtheneth us*; that is, we can do all things neceſſary to our Salvation, by the Help of the Holy Spirit, given us by Chriſt. The Bleſſings derived to us from which Spirit are very aptly and properly repreſented by the Bread and Wine in the Holy Sacrament. For as Bread is the great Strengthener of our Bodies, and Support of our animal Life, ſo does the divine Spirit ſtrengthen and animate our Souls, and maintain us in our ſpiritual Life. As Wine is the ſovereign Cordial that revives our Spirits, and invigorates our Bodies, ſo does the Grace of God comfort and refreſh our Souls, and keep us from fainting in our ſpiritual Warfare againſt the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. Nor is the Sacrament to be conſidered only as a Sign or Memorial of the Death and Sacrifice of Chriſt, and of the Benefits procured us thereby, but alſo as a Means or Inſtrument of conveying thoſe Benefits to every faithful and worthy Receiver (of which

I ſhall treat more fully in the third Chapter). Moreover, it may be looked upon as a Pledge, or Earneſt, of our future Glory and Happineſs; of which indeed we have numberleſs Promiſes, throughout the Goſpel, from Him who had *the Words of eternal Life*, and whoſe *Word is Truth*. And that theſe Promiſes might make the deeper Impreſſion on us, and be ever freſh in our Minds, he has inſtituted the holy Sacrament as a Pledge to aſſure us of his Performance of them *in due Seaſon, if we faint not*. Thus does our bleſſed Maſter, by theſe viſible Signs and Tokens, graciouſly vouchſafe to quicken our Hopes, and animate our Faith, 'till the one ſhall be loſt in Viſion, and the other ſwallowed up in Enjoyment. For *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away*. Then ſhall the Means of Grace ceaſe, when the End ſhall be obtained, and the Hope of Glory vaniſh, when that Glory itſelf ſhall be revealed and imparted to us: when we ſhall enter on our eternal Inheritance of ſuch Bleſſings as *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him*.

From the View we have now taken of the bleſſed Sacrament we are naturally led to conſider it as a Confirmation of the new Covenant,

nant, whereof Chriſt is the Mediator, being purchaſed and procured for us by his Death and Sufferings. So our Lord himſelf tells us: *This Cup*, ſays He, *is the New Teſtament*, (or Covenant, as it ſhould more properly be rendered) *in my Blood, which is ſhed for you.* Luke xxii. 20. In this Covenant God is graciouſly pleaſed to promiſe us Pardon of our paſt Sins, preſent Grace, and future Happineſs, on Condition of our hearty Repentance and ſincere Faith and Obedience: Into this Covenant we were firſt admitted at our Baptiſm, which is called by St. Peter (in reſpect to our Part of the Engagement) *the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God:* wherein we were made *Children of Chriſt, Heirs of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.* Now all theſe great and glorious Privileges, originally conferred on us in the Sacrament of Baptiſm, are confirmed to us in that of the Lord's Supper on God's Part, at the ſame time that we renew our Promiſe to fulfil the Conditions required on our's.

Laſtly, this holy Sacrament may be conſidered as a Sign of our Communion and Fellowſhip one with another. For, ſays St. Paul, *we being many are one Bread and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* 1 Cor. x. 17. As all Chriſtians, high and low, rich and poor, make up one Body, of which our

Saviour Chriſt is the Head, and one Family, of which he is the Maſter, ſo are we all commanded to eat at one Table, of one Bread, and to drink of one Cup, as a Sign of that mutual Love and Charity, which ought ever to ſubſiſt among us, and without which he will never own us as his Members, or Servants.

To ſum up what has been ſaid in few Words —This holy Sacrament (which is indeed the very Badge of our Chriſtianity) was inſtituted to repreſent, and put us in continual Remembrance of, the great Sacrifice of Chriſt upon the Croſs; the Foundation of all our Hopes of Pardon and Happineſs. It was deſigned to ſignify to us the Efficacy and Neceſſity of the Holy Spirit of God, to aſſiſt us in our Duty, and enable us to work out our Salvation. It was alſo appointed as a principal Means of conveying theſe Benefits to us; and as a Pledge of our future Glory, and of eternal Life. Laſtly, in this ſacred Ordinance we renew the Covenant entered into at our Baptiſm, and certify our Love and Charity towards one another.

CHAP. II.

On the Neceſſity of our receiving the Sacrament in order to our Salvation.

THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. Luke xxii. 19. Theſe Words of our bleſſed Saviour (ſpoken when he firſt inſtituted the Sacrament, and was going to die for our Sins) do certainly ſhew the Neceſſity of our receiving it, better than all other Arguments whatſoever. For here is a plain and poſitive Command of Him, who has an undoubted Right to command us; of our great Maſter and Redeemer, our Lord and our God. And that it was intended to be of perpetual Force and Obligation to the End of the World, appears very plainly from what follows in St. Paul's Account of the Inſtitution (which he received by immediate Revelation from Chriſt himſelf) where he ſays; *After the ſame manner alſo he took the Cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying — This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood: this do ye,* as oft *as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me: For* as often *as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's Death, 'till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. Theſe Words alſo plainly ſhew, that the holy Sacrament was to be received

often: and ſo the Diſciples and firſt Chriſtians underſtood them, making it a conſtant Part of their religious Worſhip. Accordingly we read in the Acts of the Apoſtles, Ch. ii. 42. that *They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in* BREAKING *of* BREAD (that is, receiving the Sacrament) *and in Prayers.* Indeed, in thoſe early Ages a Man would have been looked upon as no Chriſtian, who refuſed to join in the holy Communion. And let us remember, my dear Brethren, that the very ſame Obligation lies upon us as did upon them: We have all one Saviour, *Jeſus Chriſt; the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* But can we hope to be ſaved by him, while we live in wilful and open Diſobedience to one of his Commands? Can we expect to partake of the Benefit of his Sacrifice, while we refuſe to remember it in the Manner he himſelf has appointed? Let us not deceive ourſelves: If we will enter into Life, we muſt keep the Commandments; our Obedience muſt be general, to *all* the Precepts of the Goſpel, without Exception. *Whoſoever*, ſays St. James, *ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, is guilty of all.* Now Chriſt has ordained two Sacraments in his Church, and ſtrictly commanded us to obſerve them, as Means of Grace, and Conditions of our Salvation. Theſe are Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper.

Supper. They are therefore neceſſary on two Accounts; as Means of Grace, that is, of procuring and applying to us the Benefits of our Saviour's Death, and the Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit; and likewiſe as being his expreſs and poſitive Commands. You all obſerve one of theſe Sacraments, Baptiſm; and ſo far you do well; you think it neceſſary —and doubtleſs it is ſo: Why then will you not obſerve the other, which is equally commanded, and therefore equally neceſſary? In ſhort, our Duty in this Caſe is plain and clear; and if we perſiſt in our Diſobedience to our gracious Redeemer, we infallibly forfeit his Favour, do in Effect renounce our Chriſtianity, *denying the Lord that bought us*, and ſhall find, I fear, when it is too late, that to us *Chriſt is dead in vain.*

CHAP. III.

Of the Benefits ariſing from a frequent and devout Attendance on the Lord's Supper.

HAVING, I hope, fully convinced you of the Neceſſity of receiving the Sacrament in order to your Salvation, I ſhould think it almoſt needleſs to add any thing to perſuade you to a frequent and devout At-

tendance on it. However, as a further Motive and Encouragement, it may be proper to ſhew you the Reaſonableneſs and Uſefulneſs of this Duty, by laying before you the great Benefits ariſing from a due Performance of it. And firſt, we may well apply to this what the Pſalmiſt ſays of God's Laws in general, Pſalm xix. 11. that *in keeping of them there is great* Reward. As ſure as God is true, ſo ſurely will he reward thoſe who obey his Commands; generally in this Life, with that Comfort and Peace of Mind, which the World cannot give, and certainly with eternal Joy and Happineſs in the Life to come. But to be more particular—The Benefits of a devout Attendance on the holy Communion are many and various. The firſt and principal is, it's being a Means of conveying to us the Bleſſings obtained by the Death and Sacrifice of Chriſt; according to that memorable Saying of St. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Cup of Bleſſing, which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* Which Words are generally underſtood to ſignify that, by a faithful and devout Participation of the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper, we do indeed partake of his moſt bleſſed Body and Blood, which they are deſigned to repreſent; that is, of all

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thoſe ſpiritual Bleſſings procured for us by his Body broken, and his Blood ſhed for our Sakes: Then (as our Church expreſſes it, almoſt in the very Words of Scripture) "we "ſpiritually eat the Fleſh of Chriſt, and "drink his Blood; we dwell in Chriſt, and "Chriſt in us; we are one with Chriſt, and "Chriſt with us." Then are our Souls fed and nouriſhed with their proper Food and Suſtenance; as neceſſary for them, as Bread is for the Support of our Bodies. Thus united to Chriſt, our Head, we become in ſome Senſe Partakers of a divine Nature, receiving from him ſuch Communications of the Holy Spirit, as he ſees needful for us, to help our Infirmities, and enable us to perform our Chriſtian Duty. Accordingly, the Apoſtle ſays, 1 Cor. xii. 13. *We have been all made to* drink *into one Spirit*—plainly alluding to our drinking of the Wine in the holy Sacrament. And, indeed, if even to private Prayer our Saviour has annext a Promiſe, that *his Heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that aſk him*, Luke xi. 13. and if all public Devotions, being of divine Appointment, have a greater Aſſurance of God's Bleſſing attending them; how much more, in this moſt ſolemn of all religious Actions, may we expect that he will graciouſly vouchſafe us the bleſſed Influences of his Holy Spirit? Not

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that we are to judge of them by any inward Feelings or rapturous Tranſports (as Enthuſiaſts do vainly boaſt, thereby deceiving themſelves and others) but by the Effect of an holy Life, and an Improvement in all Chriſtian Graces and Virtues. Theſe are the Fruits of the Spirit; and the only ſure Signs of our having received it, and being under it's holy Direction: And theſe Fruits it will infallibly produce in us, if we are conſtant and diligent in uſing the appointed Means of obtaining them; which are Prayer and the holy Sacrament.

But beſides theſe ſpiritual Benefits of a frequent and devout Attendance at the Lord's Table, there are others which flow from it in a natural Way; as it tends to raiſe and cheriſh in our Minds pious Thoughts, and devout Affections; to inſpire us with a Love of God; to keep us ſtedfaſt in our Faith in Chriſt; and to give us a juſt Hatred and Abhorrence of all Sin and Wickedneſs. The Love of God is the nobleſt Principle of our Obedience: It is called by our bleſſed Saviour *the firſt and great Commandment*. And what ſo natural and likely to raiſe this Love in us, as the Conſideration of that great and aſtoniſhing Inſtance of his Love to us, in ſending his only Son into the World, to die for our Sins, and to make us Heirs of eternal Life? *Herein is Love,*

Love, ſays St. John, *not that we loved God, but that he loved us*—And again: *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* Now as often as we receive the Pledges of his Love in the holy Communion, we have there ſet before us the ſtrongeſt Motives that can be to Love and Gratitude on our Parts; which ſurely cannot fail to make ſuitable and laſting Impreſſions in the Breaſt of every faithful Communicant. The frequent Uſe of this Ordinance muſt likewiſe naturally confirm and eſtabliſh us in a lively Faith in Chriſt, who is therein, as it were, ſet forth crucified before us; an humble Reliance on his Merits, which we there plead to our heavenly Father; and a ſteady Hope of Salvation through him, whom we commemorate as our only Redeemer. It muſt alſo give us the ſtrongeſt Hatred and Deteſtation of Sin, when we reflect, that no leſs an Expiation than the Sacrifice of the Son of God was neceſſary to atone for the Sins of his fallen Creatures. In ſhort, every Sentiment of Humanity and Devotion, every Diſpoſition to Piety and Goodneſs, is naturally excited in us by a frequent Attendance on the holy Sacrament: It raiſes our Thoughts from Earth to Heaven; and where our Treaſure is, there it cauſes our Hearts to be alſo. Laſtly, it is a perpetual Source of Comfort to us under all our Miſeries and Afflictions,

as it fixes our Minds on another and better Life, to which this is but a Paſſage; on that heavenly Country to which we belong: *Where God ſhall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes; and there ſhall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain: for the former Things* ſhall be *paſſed away.* Rev. xxi. 4. Such are the Benefits ariſing from frequent and devout Communion: Benefits intended for us during our Progreſs through Life, and not at the Hour of Death, when this ſacred Ordinance can be of little or no Uſe, nor afford any ſolid Comfort to thoſe who have lived in the conſtant Neglect of it. It is an holy and virtuous Life, not a Death-bed Repentance, that God requires of us; and which, for the Merits of Chriſt, He will reward with Life everlaſting. We muſt therefore REMEMBER OUR CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF OUR YOUTH, and perſevere in our Obedience to Him to the End of our Lives, if we hope to be ſaved. And in order to remember and obey him as we ought, we muſt be conſtant and diligent in the Uſe of thoſe Means of Grace, which he has mercifully afforded us; particularly in our Attendance on the Lord's Supper.—Let us now enquire what Qualifications are neceſſary on our Parts, to fit us for a due Performance of this Duty, and to entitle us to all theſe Advantages.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Qualifications neceſſary to make us worthy Communicants.

IN general, whoever is fit to pray, or to join in the common Service of the Church, is fit to receive the holy Sacrament. An Heart properly diſpoſed for Prayer is doubtleſs at the ſame Time properly qualified for every other Act of religious Worſhip: and there is no Qualification requiſite for the due Receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is not as neceſſary for the due Performance of Prayer. Let us then enquire what theſe Qualifications are, and apply them to each Duty reſpectively. We may reckon them up, I think, under the four following Heads, *viz.* 1*ſt* An humble penitent Heart— 2*dly* A firm and ſincere Reſolution of Amendment and Obedience— 3*dly* A ſtedfaſt and lively Faith in God's Mercy through Chriſt, with hearty Thankfulneſs for his Death— and *laſtly* Love and Charity towards all Men. To conſider them each in their Order.

Humility I look upon as the Ground-work of all. Now, by Humility I do not mean what is commonly underſtood by it, as it reſpects our Behaviour towards one another (though

(though in that Senſe indeed it is a very important Part of Chriſtian Duty) but by Humility, as the Word is generally uſed in Scripture, is to be underſtood that humble Diſpoſition of the Heart towards God, that Lowlineſs of Mind, that Poverty of Spirit, which is ſo eſſential to true Piety, and ſo diſtinguiſhing a Mark of a good Chriſtian. It conſiſts in a deep Senſe of our own Unworthineſs, of our natural Proneneſs to Sin, and Averſion to Holineſs, and of our utter Inability of ourſelves to pleaſe God. It is, in the Language of Scripture, that broken Heart and contrite Spirit, of which ſo many excellent Things are ſpoken, and to which ſo many gracious Promiſes are annext, both in the Old and New Teſtament—*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite Spirit.* Pſ. xxxiv. 18. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Pſ. li. 17. Again, the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ſpeaking in the Perſon of Chriſt, ſays; *The Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the meek, he hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted*—Iſ. lxi. 1. And, *To this Man will I look, ſays the Lord, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* Iſ. lxvi. 2. Agreeably to theſe Declarations, our bleſſed Lord begins his Ser-

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mon on the Mount with the ſame Doctrine— *Bleſſed*, ſays he, *are the Poor in Spirit, for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Matt. v. 3. And both St. *James* and St. *Peter* (referring to a Paſſage in the Proverbs, Ch. iii. 34.) aſſure us, that *God reſiſteth the Proud, but giveth Grace unto the Humble.* It is this ſame Humility, and it's oppoſite Pride, which are ſo ſtrongly marked out to us in that moſt ſtriking and inſtructive Parable of the Phariſee and Publican (*Luke* xviii. 10l and ſo on). The former, truſting in his own Righteouſneſs, proud of his Attainments, and boaſting of his Merit, was rejected, and his Prayers refuſed Admiſſion: while the humble Publican, conſcious of his Unworthineſs, confeſſing his Sins, and relying wholly on God's Mercy and Goodneſs, was graciouſly accepted. Nearly allied to Humility is Penitence: Indeed they may be looked upon as inſeparable. For whoever has his Mind deeply impreſſed with a Senſe of his Sins, will naturally be ſorry for them, and lament them before that Being, who alone can help him: With David he *will acknowledge* his *Tranſgreſſions*, if his *Sin is ever before him.* From what has been ſaid, and indeed from the whole Tenor of the Sacred Writings, it appears how indiſpenſably neceſſary an humble penitent Heart is to make our Prayers acceptable to God; and it

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is no leſs plain, how peculiarly needful it is to make us fit for the holy Communion, which is intended to ſet before us in the ſtrongeſt Light the Wretchedneſs of our Condition by Nature, to remind us of our Sins, and to convince us of the Neceſſity of a Redeemer in order to our Pardon and Salvation.

2. The ſecond neceſſary Qualification is a firm and ſincere Reſolution of Amendment and Obedience: For we muſt not only *ceaſe to do Evil*, but *learn to do well*. This is indeed the natural Effect, and genuine Fruit of godly Sorrow; this is that true Repentance, of which the Scripture ſpeaks, *not to be repented of*: without which all Confeſſion of Sin would be no more than an empty Form, and all our Prayers a Mockery of God, and downright Hypocriſy—*The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord; but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight*. Prov. xv. 8. No leſs neceſſary is the ſame Reſolution of Amendment and Obedience to make us worthy Partakers of the holy Sacrament. For in vain do we plead his Merits, who came to deſtroy the Works of the Devil (that is, all Sin and Wickedneſs) for the Pardon of our paſt Offences, unleſs we are fully determined to forſake them for the future: In vain do we uſe thoſe Means of Grace to aſſiſt us in all Holineſs and godly Living, unleſs we firmly

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reſolve to join our own hearty Endeavours for the ſame Purpoſe, and thereby to *work out our own Salvation.*

3. But as our beſt Actions are imperfect, and of themſelves can never entitle us to the divine Favour; as *in many Things we offend all*, and ſhall continue to be more or leſs Sinners, ſo long as we live in this frail State; ſo there is another moſt neceſſary Qualification to render our Prayers, as well as our Communion, acceptable to God; which is a ſtedfaſt and lively Faith in his Mercy through Chriſt. *Without Faith*, ſays the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, *it is impoſſible to pleaſe him: For he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Heb. xi. 6. And St. *James*, ſpeaking of Prayer, ſays—*Let him aſk in Faith, nothing wavering.* Ja. i. 6. But Faith in God's Mercy *in general* is not ſufficient. It muſt be Faith in his Mercy *through Chriſt*, that will make the Worſhip of Chriſtians acceptable; for in him *he has reconciled the World unto himſelf, and through him alone we have Peace with God* —He is our Sacrifice, our Mediator and Advocate; the Foundation of our Faith, our Hope, and Confidence—*I am*, ſays our bleſſed Lord, *the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* John xiv. 6. *I am the Door: by me if any Man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved.* John x. 9. This Faith therefore

therefore is the very Eſſence of Chriſtianity; and is neceſſary to make our Prayers acceptable, as they muſt be offered up in the Name, and through the Mediation, of Chriſt; and to make us worthy Partakers of the holy Sacrament, wherein we profeſs to rely wholly on God's Mercy through our ſaid gracious Redeemer. To this Faith hearty Thankfulneſs muſt be added. And ſurely whoever ſtedfaſtly believes in this aſtoniſhing Inſtance of God's Love, ſhewn us in our Redemption, cannot but feel and expreſs the warmeſt Sentiments of Gratitude and Adoration.

Thankſgiving is a very material and principal Part of Chriſtian Devotion at all Times, and in all Places; but more particularly, when we are commemorating the Mercies of God in the Holy Sacrament. For which Reaſon this Office is very properly and emphatically ſtyled, by ancient Writers, the *Euchariſt*, which ſignifies the giving of Thanks, as our Church calls it, "Our Sacrifice of "Praiſe and Thankſgiving." And certainly to join in it without a thankful Heart can be no better than a Mocking of God, and an Inſult on our bleſſed Redeemer.

4. The fourth and laſt Qualification I am to conſider, is that of Love and Charity towards all Mankind; a moſt extenſive and neceſſary Duty, to which we are particularly bound by

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our holy Religion, and without which we are told that all our other Doings will be nothing worth. The Love of God and of our Neighbour are indeed the Sum and Subſtance of all Religion; *on theſe two Commandments*, ſays our Saviour, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Matt. xxii. 40. And to pretend to one without the other is vain and hypocritical; for the Scripture tells us, *If any Man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar.* 1 John iv. 20. The Nature of this Love, and the particular Duties flowing from it and comprehended under it, together with our Obligations to the Practice of them, are plainly and clearly ſet forth to us throughout the whole New Teſtament. Our bleſſed Lord makes it the diſtinguiſhing Mark of a true Chriſtian: *By this*, ſays he, *ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one to another.* John xiii. 35. And one grand Branch of it, the Forgiveneſs of our Enemies, he has particularly inſiſted on, in that excellent Prayer he has taught us, wherein he has made it the expreſs Condition of our aſking and obtaining Forgiveneſs of our Sins at God's Hand —*If*, ſays he, *ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.* Matt. vi. 14, 15. To the ſame Purpoſe is the Parable

rable of the mercileſs Servant, delivered in the 18th Chapter of St. *Matthew*. In ſhort, nothing can be more clear and evident than the Neceſſity of univerſal Love and good Will, to make our Prayers and Devotions in general acceptable to Almighty God. And as his Love to us, in ſending his Son into the World, to die for our Sins, is urged as the grand Motive to us to love one another, (*Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love another.* 1 John iv. 11.) ſurely when we commemorate that Love in the holy Communion, we are more particularly bound to bring with us Hearts full of Love and good Will towards our Brethren.

As to the Neceſſity of Reconciliation with our Enemies, before we join in this ſacred Ordinance, let us remember our Saviour's Admonition in his Sermon on the Mount. *Matt.* v. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembereſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way; firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* It may indeed ſo happen, that all Men are not actually at Peace with us; we may have Enemies unwilling to be reconciled: But if that is owing to their own Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs, and not to any Backwardneſs on our Part, it ſhould not give us any Diſtur-

Diſturbance, or hinder us from communicating: We are only to anſwer for ourſelves. If then we are hearty and ſincere in our Love and good Will to all Men, forgiving our Enemies, and doing them Good when fit Opportunities offer; if we make Amends and Reſtitution, to the utmoſt of our Power, to all thoſe whom we have injured or offended; in ſhort, if we love, not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth; then are we properly qualified to partake of the Pledges of God's Love in the Holy Sacrament.

You ſee now, my good Friends, what are the Qualifications abſolutely neceſſary to make our religious Duties of every kind acceptable at the Throne of Grace. Let us therefore frequently *ſearch and try our Hearts*, in order to know if we are poſſeſſed of them. Self-Examination is by no means ſo laborious and difficult a Taſk as ſome may imagine: And the oftener we perform it, the eaſier it will be. It is uſeful and proper at all Times, but more particularly ſo, before we go to our public Devotions, or to the Sacrament—*Let a Man examine himſelf*, ſays St. Paul, *and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* 1 Cor. xi. 28. And the ſame Rule may very properly be applied to public Worſhip in general; to which no one ſhould go careleſs or unprepared. Let us then ex-

amine our Conſciences, honeſtly and fairly, in regard to the Qualifications above mentioned; and we can never be at a loſs to know, whether we are fit to pray, or fit to communicate. In this Preparation, you ſee, there is nothing tedious, or difficult, or puzzling; it is, in ſhort, no other than that of an honeſt humble Heart; a Diſpoſition to believe, and live like a Chriſtian.

As to ſuch pious Perſons, as have much ſpare Time on their Hands, and chuſe to ſpend a large Portion of it in private Meditation and Prayer, before they go to the Sacrament, God forbid that I ſhould diſcourage them from ſo uſeful an Employment. But tho' it may be uſeful, and in ſome Caſes highly proper, it is by no means neceſſary in general. The Scripture does not enjoin it. Let me then earneſtly adviſe and entreat ſuch among you, as are in Buſineſs or Service, and have not much Time at Command, never to make that an Excuſe for not coming to the holy Sacrament. Diligence and Induſtry in our reſpective Callings, ſo far from being an Hindrance, is of itſelf an excellent Preparative both for praying and communicating as we ought; as it is a main Part of our Duty, to be well employed, and keeps us out of many Temptations, to which the Idle are expoſed. And be aſſured, that the

longeſt formal Preparations will avail nothing; in the midſt of an uſeleſs and miſpent Life. For to be truly devout and religious, is not to be ſo by Fits and Starts, and on particular ſolemn Occaſions, but regularly, conſtantly, and uniformly. In a Word, whoever is humble and penitent, and endeavours to do his Duty to the beſt of his Power, truſting in God's Mercy through Chriſt, and living in perfect Love and Charity with all Men, that is, whoever is a ſincere Chriſtian, is at all Times prepared for every Part of Chriſtian Worſhip, is always fit to pray, and fit to receive the Sacrament. On the other Hand, a wicked impenitent Perſon is equally unfit for both: His Prayers will be an Abomination unto the Lord, and by going to the holy Communion he will only add Sin to Sin: Unleſs he repent, his Caſe is truly deſperate; he is neither fit to live, nor fit to die.

CHAP. V.

Objections conſidered and anſwered.

TWO Objections, often urged againſt going to the Lord's Supper, are in fact anſwered already.—The one is, that it is not a neceſſary Duty—The other, that it

is a Work of great Difficulty, and requires more Time to prepare for it properly than moſt Perſons can beſtow. Now I have ſhewn you from Scripture, that it is abſolutely neceſſary, being an expreſs Command of our bleſſed Saviour to all Chriſtians without Exception. I hope too, I have convinced you, that the Examination or Preparation required before-hand is by no means a Work of much Time or Difficulty: So theſe Objections vaniſh of courſe. But it may be objected further, that it is a Duty attended with great Danger; becauſe St. *Paul* ſays, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh Damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's Body.* 1 Cor. xi. 29. Now before I explain this Paſſage, let me only beg your Attention to a plain Queſtion or two. Do you think that God Almighty would give you any Command, which it would be dangerous for you to obey? Do you imagine he would lay Snares or Stumbling-blocks in your Way? Or that he would enjoin a Duty as neceſſary to Salvation, and make your Performance of that Duty expoſe you to Damnation? I appeal to yourſelves, if this is not too ſhocking, and even blaſphemous to ſuppoſe. God forbid we ſhould entertain ſuch a Thought of our merciful and gracious Creator! But let us proceed to examine the

Paſſage

Paſſage in St. *Paul*, and the Objection, I am perſuaded, will be eaſily removed. The Caſe of the *Corinthians*, to whom he was writing, was very particular, and quite different from any that can happen in our religious Aſſemblies. It was uſual in thoſe Times to have what they called their Feaſts of Charity accompany the Celebration of the Lord's Supper: Of which Feaſts all Chriſtians, of every Rank and Condition, were to partake without Diſtinction, only with ſtrict Temperance and Moderation. Now the *Corinthians* had groſly abuſed this pious and benevolent Inſtitution:

Firſt, By ſhutting out the Poor (for whoſe Benefit it was principally deſigned) and then by eating and drinking to Exceſs: ſo that they were guilty of two great Crimes; want of Charity, and Intemperance. And to increaſe their Guilt, they partook of the holy Communion in a moſt riotous and diſorderly Manner, without conſidering the Nature and Importance of the Buſineſs they were engaged in, or indeed without diſtinguiſhing it from a common Feaſt. This was ſuch a ſhocking Abuſe and Profanation of this moſt ſacred Ordinance of Religion, as muſt ſurely make every ſerious Chriſtian tremble to think of: This was, in the ſtricteſt Senſe, *not diſcerning the Lord's Body*; and as all Sin ſubjects Men

to the Wrath and Puniſhment of God, ſo they who were guilty of this might properly be ſaid to *eat and drink their own Damnation.* But it ſhould be obſerved, that the Word, which we tranſlate *Damnation*, ſignifies in the Original *Judgment*, or *temporal Condemnation*; as appears from what the Apoſtle adds in the very next Verſe; *For this Cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep:* That is, many among you have been puniſhed by various Diſeaſes, and many by Death (for that is here meant by *ſleeping*).

I hope now you are fully ſatisfied, that there is no Danger of our receiving the Sacrament unworthily, in the ſame Manner that the *Corinthians* did. But, you may aſk, may we not ſtill receive it unworthily, in ſome other Senſe? Undoubtedly we may; and ſo we may pray unworthily. Whoever does either careleſsly, inconſiderately, or irreverently, does it unworthily. Much more, whoever lives unworthily of his holy Profeſſion, in the habitual Practice of any Sin, or the Neglect of any Duty, if he preſume to enter the Houſe of God, or approach his Altar, does in the higheſt Senſe pray or communicate unworthily; and will thereby moſt aſſuredly increaſe his Condemnation. Let ſuch therefore keep away, 'till they have humbled themſelves, with hearty Sorrow for their Sins;

and by unfeigned Repentance and Reformation made themſelves meet to join in the Congregation of the Faithful.

But let not the honeſt and ſincere Chriſtian be afraid, where no Fear is. Let him not refrain from doing his Duty at God's holy Table becauſe he is fearful he ſhall not do it ſo well as he ought. The beſt of our Services are imperfect. Let him but do it as well as he can; and God's Goodneſs and our Saviour's Merits will ſupply the reſt. Truſting in theſe, let him go boldly to the Throne of Grace; and he will not fail to be graciouſly received.

Of ourſelves indeed we are not worthy of the leaſt of God's Mercies, much leſs of the great Bleſſings tendered to us in the holy Sacrament. We are not worthy of the Air we breath, or of the Food we eat. But are we therefore to refuſe to live, or refuſe to eat? Or not to accept of God's Bounty and Goodneſs, becauſe we are undeſerving of them? If this is evidently abſurd in all other Caſes, why is it not equally ſo in regard to our receiving the Sacrament? Beſides, the very Nature of this Duty implies our Unworthineſs; and an humble Senſe of our Unworthineſs is a main Qualification for performing it as we ought. Had Mankind continued holy and innocent, there had been no Need of any Redemption,

no Sacrifice on the Croſs, no Sacrament: It was for Sinners that Chriſt died, and inſtituted this Remembrance of his Death and Paſſion. Unworthy of this amazing Goodneſs we certainly are, even the very beſt of us: but that is no Reaſon we ſhould not receive it, when offered to us, as we moſt aſſuredly ſhall, if we ſincerely repent and amend, truſting in God's Mercy, and thankfully uſing thoſe Means of Grace, which he has appointed for our Improvement in all virtuous and godly Living.

I proceed now to conſider ſome other Objections, which are indeed very weak and frivolous, and yet, I am afraid, keep many Perſons away from the holy Communion. The firſt I ſhall mention relates to the lower Set of People, who ſeem to have a very miſtaken Notion, that it is a Duty which belongs only to the Wiſe and Learned, the Rich and Great, and which the Poor have no Concern in; nay that it would be a kind of Preſumption in them to join in it. But ſurely, nothing can be more fooliſh, or more directly contrary to Scripture and Reaſon than this Suppoſition: For are we not expreſly told, that *There is no Reſpect of Perſons with God?* that *He regardeth not the Rich more than the Poor; for they all are the Work of his Hands?* Job xxxiv. 19 Have we not all the ſame Creator,

Creator, the ſame Redeemer, the ſame Sanctifier? Have we not been all baptized into one Faith, in the ſame ever-bleſſed Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt? And are we not then all equally intitled, and equally obliged, to eat of the ſame Bread, and drink of the ſame Cup, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Look into your Bibles; you will find there no Privileges or Benefits annext to Riches and Grandeur: On the contrary, our bleſſed Saviour often warns us of the Danger attending them, by their leading us into many Temptations, which Poverty is not expoſed to: And it is very remarkable, that in his Anſwer to the Diſciples of *John* the Baptiſt, ſpeaking of his divine Miſſion, he ſays, that *the* Poor *have the Goſpel preached unto them.* Neither have worldly Wiſdom or Learning any Promiſes made them in holy Scripture. We are there told, that *the Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom,* and *to depart from Evil is Underſtanding.* Job xxviii. 28. And that to *know Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified,* is the only ſaving and valuable Knowledge. And St. *Paul,* writing to the *Corinthians,* ſays, *For ye ſee your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.* 1 Cor. i. 26. *For the Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs with God.* 1 Cor. i. 20. In ſhort there is no

Perſon ſo mean and low, ſo poor and ignorant, but what may know all that is neceſſary to his Salvation as well as the greateſt, and richeſt, and wiſeſt Man living.

True Religion lies in the Heart, and ſhews itſelf in the Fruits of an holy and virtuous Life, not in worldly Wiſdom or Learning, much leſs in Pomp or Splendour. He that is *poor in Spirit*, and *rich in Faith and good Works*, let his Condition in Life be what it will, he only is the good Chriſtian, and will not fail to be accepted of God here, and eternally rewarded by him hereafter. Whoever therefore is meet for the Kingdom of Heaven, is certainly fit to join in every Act of religious Worſhip here on Earth: ſo that there is no more Reaſon for you to refrain from the Sacrament on Account of your Poverty, than from Prayer, or from coming to Church. To plead ſuch Excuſes, is fooliſh and wicked: To expect to be ſaved, without uſing the Means of Salvation which God has appointed, is indeed the Height of Preſumption. But let your Condition be never ſo low, there can be no Preſumption in your receiving the Sacrament, if with an honeſt and humble Heart, and ſteady Faith, you endeavour to do your Duty in that State of Life, to which God has called you.

Another very weak Excuſe, pleaded by ſome

ſome for a Neglect of this Duty, is, that they don't care to be ſingular or particular. "The Generality of People, ſay they, of our Age, and in our Condition, never go to the Sacrament; and why ſhould we?" Good God! Are you then afraid or aſhamed of being particular in doing your Duty? Or do you regard Men more than God? The Scripture tells us, *We muſt not follow a Multitude to do Evil.* For the ſame Reaſon, We muſt not follow a Multitude to omit doing what is good. In a plain Caſe, where our Duty is clear, as it is here, to follow bad Examples will be no Excuſe for us; and if a falſe Shame makes any of you refrain from coming to God's Holy Table, let me beg of you ſeriouſly to reflect on thoſe awful Words of our bleſſed Saviour, and to keep them conſtantly in your Minds: *Whoſoever*, ſays he, *ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my Words in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Mark viii. 38.

The laſt Excuſe I ſhall mention, for not communicating, is, that it is looked upon by ſome to be a Duty of ſo ſerious and ſolemn a Nature, as not to be conſiſtent with a lively Temper and cheerful Diſpoſition. But this is a great Miſtake; proceeding from a very

wrong Notion of Religion in general, and of this Duty in particular. Whenever we addreſs ourſelves to Almighty God, either in public or private, whether in the common Service of the Church or in the Sacrament, we cannot be too ſerious and devout: it would indeed be a great Degree of Profaneneſs to be otherwiſe. But then, this is no Hindrance to our being cheerful and pleaſant at other Times, and on proper Occaſions. It is Superſtition, not Religion, that ſours Mens Tempers, and diſpoſes them to be gloomy and melancholy. True Religion has a natural Tendency to make them cheerful and eaſy; happy in themſelves, and agreeable to all about them. Indeed there is no ſuch Thing as being truly and conſtantly cheerful without it. Nor does it by any means forbid a moderate Indulgence in innocent Recreations and Amuſements. *There is a Time for all Things:* and the ſame Perſon may be at one Time ſerious, and yet very calm and eaſy; and at another Time cheerful, and yet very innocent. In a Word, my dear Friends, let me only intreat you to make the Trial, and be aſſured you will find by Experience, that the more truly religious you are, you will be ſo much the more comfortable and happy; and that the oftener you go to Church, and receive the Sacra-

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ment with Piety and Devotion, the more you will be diſpoſed to enjoy every innocent Pleaſure of this Life, with a rational Cheerfulneſs, and grateful Satisfaction. I conclude all with the Words of the inſpired Preacher; who, ſpeaking of Wiſdom or Religion, tells us, HER WAYS ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS, AND ALL HER PATHS ARE PEACE. Prov. iii. 17.

CHAP. VI.

Directions for a devout Behaviour at Church, and particularly at the holy Communion; with ſome Remarks on the Communion-Service.

ONE general Rule to be obſerved in all Affairs we are concerned in, whether of a religious Nature or not, is to mind what we are about; to attend cloſely and diligently to that, and that only. The Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of this Rule in the common Buſineſs of Life is allowed by every one. Now as Religion is doubtleſs the moſt important Concern of all Men, the Duties of it certainly demand our peculiar Care and Attention. Whenever therefore we worſhip God, either in private or public, we ſhould keep our Minds

Minds wholly attentive to the ſolemn Work we are employed in, and intirely diſengaged from all worldly Thoughts whatſoever. Particularly, when we go to Church, we ſhould conſider before-hand, that we are going to enjoy the greateſt Honour and Happineſs this World can afford, that of being admitted into the more immediate Preſence of Almighty God, into the Palace of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We ſhould conſider too very ſeriouſly the End of our going thither, and the great Concern of our Souls in the Buſineſs we are there to be employed in; that we are to confeſs and bewail our manifold Sins and Tranſgreſſions to that Being, who alone can help us; to implore his Pardon for what is paſt, and the gracious Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit to amend our Lives for the future; to thank and praiſe him for all the Bleſſings we have already received, or do now enjoy, or hope for; and above all, for the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; humbly beſeeching him that we may receive the Benefit of it in an happy Immortality. Having our Minds duly impreſſed with theſe Reflections beforehand, we muſt be careful not to let them ſlip, during our Stay at Church; but to keep both our Eyes and Thoughts from wandering, and let our Behaviour throughout be ſerious, attentive and devout. The excellent

cellent Service of our Church is moſt admirably fitted to help us in maintaining a Spirit of true Piety and rational Devotion; and the Rules it preſcribes as to our outward Behaviour are no leſs proper, and ought to be carefully obſerved; I mean, not only in regard to kneeling or ſtanding, as we are there directed, but alſo in another Particular of no ſmall Conſequence, and yet much neglected, that of repeating or not the ſeveral Parts of the Service after the Miniſter. The Confeſſion and the Lord's Prayer the whole Congregation is to join in, as in the Litany and ſome other Parts they are to take their Share, as directed; yet not ſo loudly as to diſturb and confound one another, but (as the Exhortation enjoins) with an humble, or low Voice, which will naturally accompany "an "humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient "Heart." But as to the Prayers in general, it is the Miniſter's Buſineſs to offer them up ſingly; and the People ſhould attend to them ſilently, making them their own by ſaying an hearty Amen (which ſignifies *ſo be it*) at the End of each. This is much more decent and proper than a Cuſtom ſome Perſons have of repeating every Prayer after the Miniſter: for you may pray very fervently and devoutly with your Hearts, without opening your Lips; nay, I am perſuaded, much more ſo, if you

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do but keep your Attention fixed to what you are about. The common Service being ended, next follows the Sermon; which you ſhould carefully attend to, as being an Explanation of the Word of God, and intended to inſtruct you both in Matters of Faith and Practice. Inſtead therefore of criticizing and making your Remarks upon the Preacher (as the Manner of too many is) you ſhould endeavour to profit and improve by his Diſcourſe; as you certainly may, if it is not your own Fault. And now to come to the laſt and moſt material Part of all, the Communion Service, than which Nothing ſurely was ever better calculated for the Purpoſe of true Devotion, being wonderfully expreſſive of all that Humility, Penitence, Faith, Gratitude, and Charity, which ſhould fill the Breaſt of every devout Communicant.

Be careful then, to come with ſuch good Diſpoſitions, praying earneſtly to Almighty God to keep them freſh in your Minds; and by his Grace, and your own ſtrict Attention to the Office of the Church, you will not fail to perform this Duty acceptably to him, and to your own great Benefit and Comfort. If you join heartily and ſincerely in the common Service, you will find this an excellent Help towards keeping your Minds properly diſpoſed for that of the Communion. In both you

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ſhould avoid all Coldneſs and Indifference on the one Hand; and on the other, you ſhould not aim at any violent Emotions or rapturous Heights of Devotion, but rather endeavour to preſerve an even regular Piety; and if you are ſincere and attentive, ſome Warmth and Earneſtneſs will naturally follow. The main Point is, to be deeply affected with a Senſe of your own Unworthineſs, and of God's great Goodneſs in appointing, and our bleſſed Redeemer's Mercy in giving himſelf, a Sacrifice for our Sins. Theſe and ſuch-like Meditations ſhould be more or leſs our daily Employment, but particularly when we are about to partake of the Memorials of our Redemption at God's holy Table. The Service of our Church (that Part of it, I mean, in which the Communicants alone are concerned) begins with the Offertory, or a Collection for the Poor, in Imitation of a very ancient and laudable Practice; Almſgiving being a very proper Attendant on Prayer in general, and more eſpecially on this ſolemn Ordinance. Several Sentences of Scripture are now read, to excite us to this Branch of Chriſtian Charity, which we ſhould ſeriouſly attend to; giving according to our Abilities, and always remembering what the Word of God aſſures us of, that *He that giveth unto the Poor, lendeth*

eth unto the Lord, and what he layeth out, it ſhall be paid him again.

We are in the next Place called upon to exerciſe another Part of Chriſtian Love or Charity, in praying for the whole State of Chriſt's Church *militant* here on Earth. The word *militant* ſignifies being in a State of Warfare, and is applied to the preſent State of the Church in this Life, on Account of it's being expoſed to many Dangers and Difficulties, and having many Enemies and Temptations to ſtrive and contend with: which thoſe good Chriſtians who ſhall have overcome, having fought the good Fight, ſhall become Members of the Church *triumphant* in Heaven.

In this excellent and comprehenſive Prayer, we firſt beg God's gracious Acceptance of our Alms, and of our Prayers in general, particularly of thoſe we are now going to offer up to him. We then pray for the whole Church of Chriſt, that all Members of it may live in true Faith and conſtant Obedience to their great Maſter, and in Unity and godly Love one with another. In the next Place, according to the Scripture-rule, we pray for all Chriſtian Kings and Princes, eſpecially our own moſt gracious Sovereign, and ſuch as are in Authority under him, "that they "may truly and *indifferently*, that is, *impar-*

"*tially*,

" *tially*, minister Justice, &c." Then follows a Petition for the Clergy; and lastly for the People in general, that God would bestow on us the greatest of all Blessings here on Earth, his spiritual Grace, to prepare and qualify us for his Kingdom in Heaven. We then recommend to his Pity and Mercy all that are in Want or Affliction, thanking him for having released such of his faithful Servants as are departed from the Miseries of this Life, and beseeching him to enable us to follow their Example, and be for ever happy with them in the Life to come. Before I proceed, permit me to make one Remark on this Prayer, which may be applied to our Prayers in general, and particularly to those of our Church, which is this—(I will give it you in the Words of the admirable Bishop *Taylor*) " Let every Man study his Prayers, " and read his Duty in his Petitions." It is indeed one great End and Use of Prayer, to keep up in our Minds a just Sense of our Duty both to God and Man; and it must be our constant Endeavour, if we would have our Prayers heard, to regulate our Behaviour accordingly. To instance in the Prayer now before us, we pray that all Christians may " live in Unity and godly Love." Now if at the same Time we live in Enmity, Strife, Variance, Revenge, or any other uncharitable

ble Diſpoſition, is not this downright Hypocriſy? Do we not ſtand ſelf-condemned? How careful then ſhould we be, that our Hearts and Lives correſpond with our Petitions, and that we be ſhining Examples of that Unity and godly Love, which we pray may prevail univerſally! So likewiſe when we pray for our gracious King, and all that are in Authority under him, how ſhould this inſpire us with the warmeſt Sentiments of Duty and Loyalty to him, and of Obedience to our Governors in general; and make us deteſt and abhor that Spirit of Faction and Diſaffection, I had almoſt ſaid of Rebellion, which has of late ſo unhappily prevailed, to the Confuſion of all Order and Decency, and the Scandal of our holy Profeſſion? Our bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles, both by their Precepts and Examples, enjoined the ſtricteſt Obedience to the higher Powers, even when they were Heathens and Perſecutors of the Chriſtian Faith; and ſhall not we pay the ſame Obedience to our Rulers, who are the Guardians and Defenders of it? In ſhort, Nothing is more clear than that we cannot be good Chriſtians, if we are not good Subjects. But to return from this Digreſſion—After the Prayer for the Church militant, follows an Exhortation (the third in our Prayer-book) full of excellent Inſtruction, which demands

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our moſt ſerious Attention. It is deſigned to ſhew us the great Benefits of receiving the Sacrament worthily, and wherein ſuch a worthy Receiving conſiſts; and alſo the Danger of receiving it unworthily, and the ſure Way to prevent it. All this has been ſo fully explained to you in the foregoing Chapters, that I need not, I preſume, ſay any Thing more on the Subject in this Place. You have been told what Qualifications are neceſſary to make you worthy Communicants; if you come with theſe, you cannot fail to reap all the Benefits, and eſcape the Danger here mentioned. Be not therefore terrified or alarmed at hearing this Exhortation, but proceed, as it goes on to direct you, "to give "moſt humble and hearty Thanks to God, "the Father the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, "for their amazing Love to Mankind in the "Redemption of the World by our Saviour "Chriſt, both God and Man." Lift up your Hearts, with the warmeſt Gratitude and moſt affectionate Devotion, to your Creator your Redeemer and Sanctifier, by whom you have been ſaved from Death and Miſery, and made capable of eternal Life and Happineſs. And in particular, thank your gracious Redeemer for his infinite Condeſcenſion and Love in taking our Nature upon him, and ſubmitting to a cruel and ignominious Death for our Sakes;

Sakes; and alſo for a further Inſtance of his Kindneſs, in appointing theſe Memorials of his Death and Sufferings, and Pledges of his Love, "to our great and endleſs Comfort." You muſt likewiſe ſtedfaſtly reſolve and promiſe "to ſubmit yourſelves wholly to his holy "Will and Pleaſure, ſtudying to ſerve him "in true Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the "Days of your Life." And to ſhew that we join heartily in theſe Reſolutions and Thankſgivings, we are directed to ſay Amen at the End of this Exhortation. Then follows a ſhorter one, reckoning up in few Words the Qualifications requiſite for a worthy Communicant, and directing us to join humbly and devoutly in that excellent Confeſſion which comes next to be conſidered, and which we are to repeat after the Miniſter.

As an humble penitent Heart, deeply affected with a Senſe of our Unworthineſs and Sorrow for our Sins, is the firſt Thing needful to make our Devotions acceptable to our offended God; ſo they ſhould always begin with an Expreſſion of that Humility and Sorrow in an humble Confeſſion. This therefore is very properly made the firſt Part of the common Service of our Church, and is ſo material an one, that we ſhould always take Care to come in Time to join in it. The Communion-Service being diſtinct from the reſt,

reſt, and requiring the deepeſt Humility and moſt unfeigned Repentance in all that attend it, we are here with the greateſt Reaſon called upon to renew our Confeſſion, and bewail our Sins again, in that moſt admirable Form now before us, which is ſo plain, ſo full, ſo expreſſive, that I think you cannot fail to underſtand it. Let me only adviſe you to make it the frequent Subject of your Meditations, by reading it often over, and conſidering every Part of it carefully in private; and then you will be the more ready to uſe it properly and devoutly in public. When the Miniſter begins, be ſure you attend with more than ordinary Devotion, repeating every Word after him ſlowly and diſtinctly. Conſider yourſelf as a grievous Sinner, unworthy of the leaſt of God's Mercies, and yet going to partake of the greateſt. Conſider who it is you have offended, "the Maker of all Things, and "Judge of all Men," that Almighty Being, who can puniſh his guilty Creatures with inſtant Deſtruction or everlaſting Miſery, which as Sinners we juſtly deſerve. But conſider him too as the God of Mercy, as well as Juſtice, the "Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," who of his infinite Goodneſs has ſent his Son to die for our Sins, and reconcile us to his offended Majeſty. Reflect then on the heinous Nature of Sin in general, and on your own

Sins

Sins in particular, "which you from Time to "Time moſt grievouſly have committed." Think what baſe Ingratitude you have been guilty of to your heavenly Father, your greateſt Friend and Benefactor; and what a Return you have made for all his Mercy and Goodneſs. Think in what a Variety of Ways you have offended him, "by Thought, Word, and Deed, "provoking moſt juſtly his Wrath and Indig-"nation againſt you." And if you are conſcious of any particular Sins you have more than uſual offended in, bewail theſe with particular Earneſtneſs and Sorrow.

In the Words of the Confeſſion, we muſt "earneſtly repent, and be heartily ſorry for "theſe, and all our Miſdoings; the Remem-"brance of them muſt be grievous unto us, "and the Burthen of them intolerable."

Thus ſelf-convicted of our Guilt, obnoxious to the Wrath and Puniſhment of that God who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and utterly unable of ourſelves to do any Thing to appeaſe his Anger or avert his Judgments, we can only throw ourſelves upon his Mercy, however undeſerving— "Have Mercy upon us, have Mercy upon "us, moſt merciful Father!" But how ſhall we dare to expect or even aſk for that Mercy, to which we can have no Title of ourſelves, after our repeated Tranſgreſſions? Through

Chriſt

Chriſt we may ſtill expect it, and if it be not our own Fault, ſhall moſt certainly obtain it. Let us therefore devoutly go on, in full Aſſurance of Faith, "For thy Son, our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt's Sake, forgive us all that is paſt." But as it is in vain to lament, or aſk Forgiveneſs of our paſt Sins, without reſolving to avoid them for the future, and as the beſt Reſolutions and Endeavours of us frail Mortals would be weak and ineffectual, without the gracious Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, we in the laſt Place humbly implore this in the following Words, "Grant that we may ever "hereafter ſerve and pleaſe thee in Newneſs "of Life, to the Honour and Glory of thy "Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, "Amen."

Now follows the Abſolution, the Delivery of which is a peculiar Part of the Prieſt's Office, to be pronounced by him alone, ſtanding, the People ſtill kneeling. It is here in a ſomewhat different Form from that uſed in the Common Service; but the Deſign is the ſame in both; to wit, to aſſure us of God's Pardon, on Condition of our true Faith and ſincere Repentance. To give you as clear a Notion of this Matter as I can. The Word *Abſolution* ſignifies properly a ſetting looſe or Deliverance; and is here to be underſtood in the ſame Senſe as Pardon, or a delivering

of us from the Bondage, the Guilt, and Punishment of Sin. We are all by Nature vile Sinners, and by our actual Transgressions Rebels against the great King and Lord of the Universe, and utterly unworthy of his Mercy and Forgiveness: which however he has graciously promised us, for the Sake of his dear Son, on Condition of our Faith and Repentance. Now this Pardon, or Act of Grace, is proclaimed and delivered to us by the Priest, as God's Herald or Minister, agreeably to the Commission given by Christ to his Apostles, and thence derived to the Christian Priesthood in all future Ages; and we are to consider it as coming from God himself, who alone can forgive Sins. The Priest has no such Power; neither indeed can he apply God's Pardon absolutely or discretionally, to any particular Person or Persons; because he cannot see into the Heart, nor consequently know who is qualified to receive it and who not. It is sufficient for us, and should afford us the greatest Comfort, to be assured that God, to whom all Hearts are open, will undoubtedly confirm and ratify this Pardon to all such as he sees fit for it; that is, to all sincere Penitents and true Believers. The Absolution now before us is in the Form of a Prayer, addressed to God, by the Priest only, on our Behalf, and is therefore

therefore very different from other Prayers, which are the joint Petitions of the Miniſter and Congregation: ſo that for us to join in this, or repeat it after him, would be highly abſurd. We are indeed the Perſons intereſted in it, and ſhould attend to it moſt ſeriouſly and devoutly; declaring our Aſſent by an hearty Amen! which is as much as to ſay, "Vouch-"ſafe, O merciful God, to hear the Prayer "of thy Miniſter, now offered up for us thy "unworthy Servants, who have confeſſed "our Sins unto thee; and grant, upon our "true Repentance, that this Pardon may "remain with us now and for evermore, for "the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." I do not mean that we are to repeat theſe Words after the Abſolution (which the Time would not permit) but only that when we ſay Amen after it, which we ought to do moſt heartily, we ſhould lift up our Souls to God in ſuch Thoughts as theſe Words expreſs. The Prieſt, having thus prayed for our Pardon, and as it were proclaimed it to us from the Throne of Grace, proceeds to give us ſtill ſtronger Aſſurances of it in the Words of Truth itſelf, reading the four Sentences of Scripture, which contain the very Charter of our Salvation. "Hear, ſays he, what "comfortable Words our Saviour Chriſt "ſaith unto all that truly turn to him; *Come*

" *unto me, all that travel, and are heavy laden,*
" *and I will refreſh you.*" Mat. xi. 28. Words of Comfort indeed! which ſpeak Peace to the afflicted Soul, labouring under the Burthen of its Sins. Let us then, with Hearts full of Joy and Gratitude, accept this gracious Invitation of our bleſſed Redeemer, whoſe *Yoke is eaſy, and whoſe Burthen is light.* Let us go unto him in full Aſſurance of Faith, truſting to his Merits for the Pardon of our paſt Sins, and reſolving to forſake them, and to live henceforth as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord. Again: " *So God*
" *loved the World, that he gave his only begot-*
" *ten Son, to the End that all that believe in*
" *him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting*
" *Life.*" John iii. 16. Amazing Love! to reſcue us from eternal Miſery, and raiſe us to everlaſting Life! Us, who were guilty Sinners and Enemies to God, unworthy of the leaſt of his Favours. Behold! God manifeſt in the Fleſh! behold him dying on the Croſs, to ſave us from Ruin, and make us for ever happy with himſelf in Heaven! His Words are true; his Promiſes are ſure: Let us believe, obey, and be thankful.

Next follows a Paſſage from St. Paul—
" *This is a true Saying, and worthy of all Men*
" *to be received, that Chriſt Jeſus came into*
" *the World to ſave Sinners.*" 1 Tim. i. 15.

Let us all, with the firmeſt Faith and moſt hearty Gratitude, receive this true Saying, delivered to us from the Holy Spirit of Truth itſelf; admiring the Love and Condeſcenſion of Him, who, being *God*, ſubmitted to become *Man* for our Sakes; who left the Boſom of his Father, the Regions of Bliſs and Glory, to undergo the Miſeries of a painful Life and a cruel ignominious Death, for the Salvation of us his ſinful Creatures. Let us ever adore his Goodneſs, and rejoice with Joy unſpeakable, ſubmitting ourſelves in all Things to his Will and Pleaſure, and ſtudying to ſerve him in true Holineſs all the Days of our Life.

The fourth and laſt Sentence is taken from St. John—"*If any Man ſin, we have an Ad-*
"*vocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righ-*
"*teous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins.*" 1 John ii. 1, 2. And what Man is there that liveth and ſinneth not? None ſurely. Both Scripture and Experience teach us this ſad Truth, that we are all guilty Offenders. But though *we* are *ſinful*, *he* is *righteous*; though we are unworthy, God is merciful; though we have no Merits of our own to plead, our Saviour's we may moſt effectually: He is our Advocate, and will plead our Cauſe for us, and the Succeſs of his Pleading we cannot doubt of. Truſting therefore in his

 Merits,

Merits, let us with hearty Repentance, and firm Reſolutions of future Obedience, *return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon us, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Such Reflections as theſe muſt naturally ariſe in the Breaſt of every one that comes properly diſpoſed to receive the holy Communion, and attends devoutly to the Sentences above recited; than which none could have been choſen more fit to fill our Minds with humble Confidence in God's Mercy, with joyful Gratitude, and pious Adoration.

The Prieſt now bids us, "Lift up your "Hearts." Let us, with the utmoſt Sincerity, make Anſwer, "We lift them up un- "to the Lord." He then goes on, "Let "us give Thanks unto our Lord God." Let us joyfully reply, "It is meet and right ſo "to do." And now, having our Thoughts fixed on Heaven, and our Hearts filled with devout Affections and Gratitude, let us attend to the Prieſt, while he addreſſes Almighty God at his holy Table, in that ſolemn Form of Thankſgiving. "It is very meet, right, "and our bounden Duty, that we ſhould, at "all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks "unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty "everlaſting God" (here we may ſecretly ſay Amen).

After

After which, on particular Feſtivals, follows a Preface ſuitable to the Occaſion, which the Miniſter is to repeat alone, the People attending: And then let us all, both with Heart and Voice, join in that moſt noble and heavenly Hymn of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, in which we, that now dwell on Earth, unite our Praiſes with the Inhabitants of Heaven; and which God grant we may all ſing together in thoſe Manſions of Joy and Glory, to all Eternity! "Therefore, with Angels and Archangels, and "with all the Company of Heaven, we "laud and magnify thy glorious Name, "evermore praiſing thee, and ſaying, Holy, "holy, holy, Lord God of Hoſts! Heaven "and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory "be to thee, O Lord moſt high." In this ſublime Hymn, we laud or praiſe God, under the Title of *Lord God of Hoſts, (or Armies)* which is often given him in holy Scripture, to denote his Sovereignty, as Creator and Lord of the Univerſe, from whom the innumerable Hoſts of Angels, as well as all other Creatures, derive their Being, and on whom they entirely depend. And we praiſe him under the *triple* Appellation of *holy*, to ſignify the Holineſs and Purity of his Nature (for he only is holy) and in Acknowledgment of the Myſtery of the *Holy Trinity*, or three

Perſons in one God, revealed to us by the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Into this Faith we have been all baptized; in the Name of theſe three divine Perſons we all receive our Bleſſing at the End of our public Devotions; and in the Hymn we are now conſidering, we praiſe and adore the ſame ever-bleſſed God, our Creator, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and in all three Inſtances (which I beg you to take particular Notice of) we uſe the Words of Scripture itſelf. Whoever therefore denies the Doctrine of the Trinity, denies the Word of God; does in Effect renounce his Baptiſm, and forfeits his Title to that Bleſſing, which God alone can beſtow, and which he has commanded us to receive in the Name of the ſame three divine Perſons, in which we are, by the ſame Authority, baptized. Let us all pray to God, that he would keep us ſtedfaſt in this Faith, till we join the Hoſt of Angels and the Church triumphant, in ſinging Praiſes to the thrice-Holy in Heaven. But to proceed in the Communion Service—Leſt, after having ſung the Song of Angels, we ſhould forget that we are ſinful Men, and fancy ourſelves in any Senſe worthy of the Bleſſings we are called to partake of, our Church has wiſely provided the following admirable Form of Humiliation, wherein we acknowlege

acknowlege our own Unworthineſs, and declare our intire Truſt in God's Mercy for Acceptance. The Prieſt begins (and let us all with humble and contrite Hearts, devoutly, though ſilently, join him). "We do not preſume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, truſting in our own Righteouſneſs, but in thy manifold and great Mercies." Alas! we have no Righteouſneſs of our own; our beſt Deeds are of themſelves as *filthy Rags:* it is thy bleſſed Spirit alone that can lead us in the Way of Holineſs, and the Merits of thy Son that muſt make our imperfect Services well-pleaſing in thy Sight; Merit we can have none. We therefore diſclaim all Truſt in ourſelves, all Self-Righteouſneſs; and humbly proſtrate ourſelves before thee, relying wholly on thy Mercy and Goodneſs, and crying out with the Publican in the Goſpel, *Lord be merciful unto* us *Sinners*, "We are not worthy ſo much as to gather "up the Crumbs under thy Table." So far from being worthy of the high Honour and ineſtimable Privilege of being admitted as Gueſts at thy holy Table, we acknowlege ourſelves unworthy even of picking up the Crumbs that fall from it. *The Wages of Sin is Death*, and we all, as vile Sinners, deſerve it. Yet, O gracious Lord, thou feedeſt us with the Bread of Life, and giveſt us to drink

of the Cup of Immortality. " Thou art the " ſame Lord, whoſe Property is, always to " have Mercy." As thy Nature is unchangeable, ſo is thy Goodneſs. Before Man had ſinned, thou hadſt provided a Ranſom; and no ſooner did he rebel, than thou didſt declare thy gracious Promiſe of Pardon, through Him who was to *bruiſe the Serpent's Head.* Lo! thou art ſtill the ſame: the promiſed Seed is long ſince come; the Lamb is ſlain; and we fall down before thine Altar to partake of the bleſſed Sacrifice, provided for our Redemption. " Grant us therefore, " gracious Lord, ſo to eat the Fleſh of thy " dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt, and to drink his " Blood, that our ſinful Bodies may be made " clean by his Body, and our Souls waſhed " through his moſt precious Blood; and that " we may evermore dwell in him, and he in " us. Amen." Receive therefore, O Lord, the humble Supplications of thy unworthy Servants; and grant that we, by partaking of this Bread and Wine, may ſo ſpiritually and through Faith partake of his bleſſed Body and Blood, that we may thereby be cleanſed from all Filthineſs of the Fleſh and Spirit; and that, having his Grace dwelling in our Hearts, we may be happily united with him now, henceforth, and for ever.

I have now, I hope, given you the full Senſe

Senſe and Meaning of this excellent Prayer, and ſuggeſted ſuch Thoughts, as I think it muſt naturally raiſe in your Minds, if you attend to it as you ought. How ſhort, and yet, how complete a Form is it of true Chriſtian Humiliation! How wonderfully contrived to ſubdue every proud and preſumptuous Thought, to inſpire us with humble Devotion, and ſo to prepare us for that heavenly Feaſt, which we are going to partake of!

Next follows the Prayer of Conſecration; the Deſign of which is, to beg God's Bleſſing on the Elements of Bread and Wine, that, by the Operation of his Holy Spirit, he would be pleaſed to make them, to all faithful Receivers, in a ſpiritual Senſe, the Body and Blood of Chriſt: that is, in other Words, that they may be a Means of conveying to us the Benefits of the Sacrifice of Chriſt upon the Croſs, which they are appointed to repreſent. In this one moſt important and comprehenſive Petition the whole Prayer centers; "that we receiving theſe thy Creatures of "Bread and Wine, according to thy Son, "our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's holy Inſtitution, "in Remembrance of his Death and Paſſion, "may be Partakers of his moſt bleſſed Bo-"dy and Blood:" That, while we only ſee the Shadow, we may by Faith receive the Subſtance; and while we only eat and drink

the Signs or Memorials, we may partake of the Reality of thoſe Bleſſings, which they point out to us. And let us not doubt, but earneſtly believe, that God will graciouſly hear this our devout Supplication; and that the ſame divine Power, which in Baptiſm ſanctifies Water to the waſhing away of Sin, can, and will, conſecrate theſe his Creatures of Bread and Wine, to be the Means of imparting to us all ſpiritual Graces, and other Benefits of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion. Here then let us ſecretly ſay Amen; and while the Prieſt goes on with the Conſecration in the Words of Scripture, let us fix our Thoughts on our bleſſed Saviour, inſtituting this holy Sacrament juſt before he died for us; and lift up our Hearts in humble Gratitude and Adoration to him, who was ſlain, and hath redeemed us to God by his moſt precious Blood. Let us, at the ſame Time, though ſilently, beg of God, that he would ſend his Holy Spirit on the Bread and Wine, now conſecrating for our Uſe; and when the Miniſter has finiſhed, let us heartily and devoutly ſay Amen.

The following Prayers, I think, are the beſt that can be uſed, while the Miniſter and others are receiving. The firſt is taken from *Wilſon*, the other from *Gibſon*, both once excellent Prelates of our Church.

Let

Let me adviſe you to ſay them ſoftly, ſlowly, and deliberately; carefully conſidering every Sentence as you go along.

" That I am invited to thy Table, is not " becauſe I am worthy, but becauſe thou, " O God, art infinitely good and kind. Pity " my Infirmities, which are known to thee, " and accept of my imperfect Obedience to " this Command. I acknowlege my Un- " worthineſs: I place all my Hopes in thy " Mercy and Promiſes in Jeſus Chriſt. I " ſincerely purpoſe to lead a Chriſtian Life, " and to uſe all Diligence to make my Cal- " ling and Election ſure. With theſe Pur- " poſes I go to thine Altar, truſting in thy " Goodneſs for the Pardon of my Defects, " and for an Increaſe of all thoſe Graces that " are neceſſary to make me more worthy to " eat of that Bread, and drink of that " Cup."

" I behold by Faith my crucified Lord " dying for me, and as my only Saviour and " Redeemer I adore and worſhip him. O " Lord! increaſe and enliven my Faith; " and grant that through his Merits, who " died and roſe again for me, I may receive " the Remiſſion of my Sins, and the com- " fortable Aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit."

If the Communion is large, and the Space long before you go to the Altar, you may lengthen

lengthen out your Devotions in other Prayers ſuitable to this Solemnity; many of which are to be found in ſundry Treatiſes on this Subject. But I muſt own, I ſee no Neceſſity for employing the whole Time in actual Prayer. Let us remember, that God regards the Sincerity of the Heart much more than the Length of our Petitions. The main Point is, to keep our Minds employed in pious and ſuitable Meditations, which a devout Communicant can never be at a Loſs for. Sorrow for our Sins, hearty Reſolutions of Amendment, an earneſt Deſire of God's Grace, and Faith in his Mercy through Chriſt, will afford us ample Matter for this Purpoſe.

Thus then let us employ our Thoughts till we go to the holy Table; and there let us fix them on our bleſſed Redeemer, dying for our Sins. When the Miniſter, as God's Steward, draws near you with the conſecrated Bread, attend with all poſſible Devotion to the Prayer he offers up for you in theſe Words: "The Body of our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt, which was given for thee, preſerve "thy Body and Soul unto everlaſting Life!" Here ſay with a low Voice, Amen! lifting up your Heart to God in earneſt Prayer, that it may be unto you according to theſe Words, a Seal of your Pardon, and a Pledge of your

Salva-

Salvation. " Take and eat the Bread, in " Remembrance that Chriſt died for thee, " and feed on him in thy Heart, by Faith, " with Thankſgiving." When the Cup is brought to you, keep your Thoughts fixed as before, on your merciful Redeemer, ſhedding his Blood for you ; attend to the Miniſter, as you did when he brought the Bread, the Prayer being in Effect the ſame ; and ſay Amen after the Words " everlaſting Life." Then take the Cup, and drink very moderately of the conſecrated Wine, " in Remem- " brance that Chriſt's Blood was ſhed for " thee, and be thankful." Then ſay ſecretly, " May the Blood of Chriſt cleanſe me from " all Sin ! — Bleſſing, Honour, Glory, " Thankſgiving, and Power be unto God, " and unto the Lamb for ever and ever ! " Amen." Now retire from the Altar, to make Room for others ; and when you are returned to your Pew, kneel down, and offer up ſome ſuch Thankſgiving as the following.

" Praiſe the Lord ! O my Soul, and all " that is within me bleſs his holy Name ; " Praiſe the Lord ! O my Soul, and forget " not all his Benefits : who forgiveth all " thine Iniquities, and healeth all thy Diſ- " eaſes : who redeemeth thy Life from De- " ſtruction, and crowneth thee with loving Kind-

" Kindneſs, and tender Mercies. What
" ſhall I render unto thee for all thy unde-
" ſerved Goodneſs, and for theſe comfortable
" Pledges of thy Pardon and Favour, which
" I have received at thy holy Table? Ac-
" cept, O Lord, the Offering of a thankful
" Heart, and the ſincereſt Deſires and Reſo-
" lutions to pleaſe thee. I have ſworn, and
" am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed, to keep thy righ-
" teous Judgments. O hold thou up my
" Goings in thy Paths, that my Footſteps
" ſlip not; and grant that by the Help of
" thy Grace I may ſo love and obey thee in
" this Life, that in the World to come I
" may have Life everlaſting, through the
" Merits of thy dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt, my
" only Saviour and Redeemer!"

This, or ſome ſuch Act of Devotion, may very properly be uſed, provided there is Time for it before the Poſt-Communion begins; but by no Means otherwiſe. For let me beg of you to remember once for all, that your private Prayers ſhould never interfere with the Service of the Church, which is much more edifying and important.

The Moment therefore the Miniſter begins the Lord's Prayer, after all have communicated, be ſure you lay aſide all other Books and Devotions, and join fervently with him, in Heart and Voice, in that truly divine Compo-

Compoſition, which is here uſed with great Propriety, to make our imperfect Prayers acceptable.

In the Prayer next following, we firſt humbly beſeech our heavenly Father "mercifully to accept this our Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving." A very proper and neceſſary Petition for us ſinful Creatures, who, conſcious of our Unworthineſs and of the Imperfection of our beſt Services, muſt truſt wholly to the all-ſufficient Sacrifice of Chriſt upon the Croſs, to render this Sacrifice of our's acceptable at the Throne of Grace.

We then proceed to enlarge our Supplications for the whole Chriſtian Church; that we, and all other Members of the ſame may, "*by* the Merits and Death of Chriſt, and "*through* Faith in his Blood, obtain Remiſſion of our Sins, and all other Benefits of "his Paſſion." This is expreſſed with great Accuracy and Exactneſs, to ſhew that our Pardon and Salvation are intirely owing to his Merits and Death, as the only Cauſe thereof, and that Faith is the Inſtrument whereby we apply thoſe Bleſſings to ourſelves: For neither our Faith nor good Works have any Merit, nor can give us any Claim to Pardon, though they are indeed indiſpenſably neceſſary as Conditions of our obtaining it.

In the next Place, we go on to a very material

terial Part of our Chriſtian Sacrifice, wherein "we offer up ourſelves, our Souls and "Bodies, to Almighty God, as a reaſonable, "holy, and lively Sacrifice unto him." The Meaning of which is, that we devote and dedicate ourſelves intirely to his Service; promiſing (as the Scripture expreſſes it) that we, who *are Chriſt's, will crucify the Fleſh, with the Affections and Luſts*—that we will *mortify our Members which are upon the Earth* —that is, ſubdue all our irregular Appetites, and forſake all Sin and Wickedneſs; living from henceforth as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord.

This is that *living* and *holy* Sacrifice the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, (Rom. xii. 1.) without which all other Sacrifices will avail us Nothing; and that we may offer it effectually, and be enabled to keep the ſolemn Vows of Obedience we now make to God, we go on to pray, "that all we, who are Partakers of "this holy Communion, may be fulfilled "with his Grace and heavenly Benediction;" without which all our beſt Endeavours would be vain, and our moſt ſolemn Reſolutions ineffectual. The Prayer concludes with an humble Acknowlegement of our Unworthineſs to offer unto God any Sacrifice, and an earneſt Requeſt that he will be pleaſed nevertheleſs to "accept this our bounden Duty

"and

" and Service, not weighing our Merits, but " pardoning our Offences, through Jeſus " Chriſt our Lord;" by whom, as our Mediator, we aſcribe all Honour and Glory to the " Father Almighty, in Unity with the " Son and Holy Ghoſt, World without " End."

The other Prayer, which is very ſeldom uſed, conſiſts of a Thankſgiving to Almighty God for the Privileges and Benefits we have been made Partakers of at his holy Table; and a Petition for his Grace, " that we may " continue in that holy Fellowſhip, and do " all ſuch good Works as he has prepared " for us to walk in." From both Prayers we may learn this important Leſſon, which ſhould never be out of our Minds, that the Benefit of our communicating to ourſelves, as well as it's Acceptance with God, depends intirely on our future Obedience in a Life of Virtue and Holineſs. For this End, we beg the gracious Aſſiſtance of his good Spirit, which will never be wanting to thoſe who ſincerely pray for it, and uſe the appointed Means to obtain it. But though without this we can do Nothing, yet, in order to grow in Grace, we muſt join our own hearty Endeavours to the divine Power within us; ſtriving to avoid every Sin, and to improve in the Practice of every Virtue. It is true, that

we

we can never arrive at Perfection in all or in any Part of our Duty in this frail State; but we muſt be always aiming at it, and if it be not our own Fault, we may, by God's Help, make a great Progreſs towards it. However, let us not be diſcouraged, if we do not find ſo quick and ſudden a Change in our Minds, or ſo thorough a Reformation in our Lives, as we could wiſh, immediately after receiving the Sacrament. Let us only be ſincere and hearty in our Applications to God for his Grace, and go on in a regular and uniform Courſe of Obedience to his Will, to the utmoſt of our Power, and we need not fear the Event. He is faithful that has promiſed, and *will never leave or forſake* thoſe who put their Truſt in his Mercy.

In purſuance of the Example of our bleſſed Saviour, who, after he had finiſhed his laſt Supper with his Diſciples, ſang an Hymn, the Church now directs us to join in that admirable one at the End of the Communion-Service, wherein we ſing Praiſes to God and to the Lamb, in the moſt ſublime Strains of Rapture and Adoration. It begins with the very Words the Angels uſed, when they firſt brought the glad Tidings of our Redemption, at our Saviour's Birth, *praiſing God, and ſaying, Glory to God in the Higheſt, and on Earth Peace,*

Peace, Good Will towards Men. Luke ii. 13, 14.

Thus did thoſe bleſſed Spirits celebrate the divine Mercies, which Man was to receive: and ſurely we can never more properly join the heavenly Hoſt in this Hymn of Adoration, than when we have been entertained with that heavenly Food at the Lord's Table. What they ſaw and celebrated before-hand is now accompliſhed; ſo that we may with a peculiar Propriety ſing Praiſe and Glory to "God in the Higheſt," who has, by ſending his Son to die for us, made "Peace on "Earth," and ſhewn his "Good-will to-"wards Men."

We then proceed to praiſe and thank him in a Variety of Words, admirably choſen both to excite and expreſs our warmeſt Gratitude and moſt devout Adoration.

In the next Place, we addreſs ourſelves to the bleſſed Jeſus, invoking him as our Redeemer, our Mediator, and Advocate, earneſtly imploring his Mercy, and begging him to receive our Prayers: "For thou only art "holy"—in and from thyſelf—Thou art the Fountain of Holineſs, whence it muſt be derived to all created Beings. "Thou only "art the Lord"—Thou art by Nature, as well as Office, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* "Thou only, O Chriſt, with the "Holy

" Holy Ghoſt, art moſt high in the Glory " of God the Father."

Thus ends this excellent Hymn (compoſed chiefly of Paſſages from Scripture) with an Acknowlegement of the Glory of the eternal Trinity, to whom be aſcribed all Honour, Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, by the Church throughout all Ages. Amen!

Immediately after this Hymn, is commonly uſed one of thoſe ſix Collects, which are placed in our Prayer-Book after the Bleſſing. They are all very excellent in their Kind, and extremely proper to conclude our Devotions with; and are withal ſo plain and intelligible, as to need no Explanation. I ſhall therefore proceed to the Bleſſing, which cloſes the whole Service.

It has been the conſtant Cuſtom in all religious Aſſemblies, both before and ſince the Coming of Chriſt, for the Congregation to be diſmiſſed by a ſolemn Bleſſing from the Prieſt. Under the Law there was one appointed by God himſelf, to be uſed after the daily Sacrifice, which was much the ſame in Subſtance, though in different Words, with what we uſe under the Goſpel, after this our Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving. In regard to the Delivery of the Bleſſing, as I obſerved to you with Reſpect to the Abſolution, the Prieſt acts as the Miniſter of God,

pronouncing it in his Name, and by his Authority. We are not, therefore, to think ſlightly of it, becauſe it is uttered by a frail Mortal like ourſelves; but to receive it with all poſſible Reverence and Thankfulneſs, as coming from God himſelf, the Author and Giver of all good Things, who can diſpenſe them to us in what Manner, and by what Inſtruments, he thinks fit. After the Bleſſing under the Law, Numb. vi. 24. it is added by God, *I will bleſs them*—that is, I will confirm and make good this Bleſſing, delivered by my Servant the Prieſt, unto all ſuch as ſhall faithfully and worthily receive it; and there can be no Doubt of God's doing the ſame to us Chriſtians when, with ſincere Faith and humble Gratitude, we receive his heavenly Benediction from the Mouth of his Miniſter under the Goſpel. The Bleſſing now before us contains, as it were, the Sum and Subſtance of all our former Petitions: the full Meaning of it I take to be this—"May the "Peace of God, or the Senſe and Experience "of the divine Favour and Goodneſs (the "Comfort whereof ſurpaſſes all Underſtanding and Comprehenſion) keep your Hearts "and Minds ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the "true ſaving Knowlege, and ſincere Love of "God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our "Lord! And may the Bleſſing of God Al-

"mighty,

" mighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt,
" be now, and remain with you, and pre-
" ſerve you, both in Body and Soul, to all
" Eternity!" And let all the People ſay Amen!

You will now do well to put up ſome ſuch ſhort Petition as the following, which may be uſed at all Times, after the Service of the Church is finiſhed. " May this Bleſſing re-
" main with me, and with all here preſent!
" And grant, O merciful Lord, that what I
" have faithfully aſked according to thy Will,
" I may effectually obtain, through the Me-
" rits of thy dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt, our
" Lord."

The following Prayer, moſtly taken from Biſhop *Gibſon*, is very proper to be uſed at Home, at any Time of the Day that beſt ſuits you, after you have communicated.

" Moſt gracious and merciful God, who
" of thy great Goodneſs haſt ſpared and pre-
" ſerved me to this Day, I give thee humble
" and hearty Thanks for the Opportunity I
" have enjoyed of coming to thy holy Table,
" and receiving the moſt comfortable Pledges
" of thy Pardon and Favour. Let not thy
" Mercy hitherto, in giving me Space for
" Repentance, encourage me to go on ſe-
" curely in the Neglect of my Duty; but
" let the Remembrance of thy Goodneſs, and

" of

" of the Vows and Reſolutions I have made
" in thy Preſence, oblige me perpetually to
" watch over my Ways, and do that which
" is well-pleaſing in thy Sight. My Heart
" is corrupt and deceitful above all Things:
" ſanctify it, I beſeech thee, by thy Holy
" Spirit, and eſtabliſh it for ever in the Paths
" of Truth and Righteouſneſs. Let not
" the Cares and Pleaſures of this World
" make me forget the Things of the next;
" nor do thou ever forſake me in the Hour
" of Temptation, but be always my Sup-
" port and Strength in my ſpiritual Warfare
" againſt the World, the Fleſh, and the
" Devil. Keep me, O Lord, from all pre-
" ſumptuous Sins, leſt they get the Dominion
" over me; and more eſpecially from thoſe
" which do moſt eaſily beſet me, (here re-
flect on the Sins you are moſt ſubject to, and
beg God's ſpecial Grace to guard you againſt
them). " Theſe Sins, and whatſoever
" elſe is contrary to thy holy Laws, I will
" heartily endeavour to ſhun and avoid: And
" I implore the conſtant Aſſiſtance of thy
" Holy Spirit, to ſubdue my Corruptions,
" and reſtrain all inordinate Deſires; to make
" me delight in thy Ways, and to fill my
" Soul with all Chriſtian Graces and Virtues;
" that ſo ſtriving daily againſt Sin, and
" growing in Grace, I may live and die in

" thy Favour and Obedience, and be at
" length received into thy eternal and glori-
" ous Kingdom, through the Merits and
" Mediation of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, my
" bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen."

In ſome ſuch Devotions as theſe, and in reading good Books at home, we ſhall certainly employ our Time very uſefully and properly, after having received the holy Sacrament. " But this (to uſe the Words of the aforementioned excellent Prelate) is " only *convenient*, not *neceſſary*; nor is it re-" quired of Perſons in any other Degree, " than as their Condition in the World, and " their Circumſtances at that particular Time, " will allow. In all ſuch Caſes, if Servants " and others, who have not the Command of " their own Time, cannot employ as much " of it in theſe Exerciſes as they wiſh and " deſire, they may reſt aſſured, that God " approves and accepts their willing Mind, " provided they go on in a ſincere Reſolution " to avoid and forſake Sin, and live in the " Fear of God, and behave themſelves with " Conſcience and Honeſty, in the ſeveral " Stations which his Providence has ap-" pointed them."

APPEN-

APPENDIX I.

Advice to Parents, and thoſe who have the Care of the Education of Children.

THE Education of Children being an Affair of the utmoſt Importance, though in general, I fear, greatly miſunderſtood, or ſadly neglected, I ſhall beg Leave to offer a few ſhort Remarks on that Part of it which relates to their Inſtruction in religious Matters; and more particularly (as the Subject I have been upon naturally leads me) to their Attendance on public Worſhip.

In the firſt Place, I beg you to obſerve, that what I advanced in the Fourth Chapter, viz. that "whoever is fit to pray, or to join "in the common Service of the Church, is "fit to receive the Sacrament," relates only to Perſons arrived at Years of Diſcretion. For Children may undoubtedly be fit to pray, and ſhould be taught to do ſo, both in private and public, long before they are of Underſtanding ſufficient to attend the Communion; though indeed they are uſually taken much too young to Church, and too late to the Sacrament, which is a great and fatal Error, productive of many bad Conſequences.

It ſhould be the great Care of Parents, and others, who are intruſted with their Education, to inſtil into their tender Minds, as early as poſſible, a juſt and awful Senſe of God and Religion, and to inſtruct them in the Nature of Prayer, and their Obligations to perform it. The Lord's Prayer in particular, and other ſhort and eaſy Forms of Devotion, ſhould be taught and explained to them; and they ſhould be made frequently to repeat them without Book, ſlowly and deliberately, ſo that they may underſtand and attend to what they pray for: For which Purpoſe too, proper Queſtions ſhould be put to them, as they go on, relative to the Subject of each Petition. And the ſame Rule ſhould be ſtrictly obſerved in regard to their learning the Catechiſm; which is indeed an excellent Compendium of the Doctrines and Duties of our holy Religion, and therefore it is very proper that Children ſhould be early inſtructed in it. But I am certain that the common Way of teaching it (if it may be called teaching) can anſwer no good End or Purpoſe; I mean, making them get it by Heart, then letting them repeat it over as faſt as they can jabber, without, perhaps, knowing the Meaning of a Word they ſay. This is treating them more like Parrots than rational Creatures, and to this ſhameful Practice

tice much of that groſs Ignorance in religious Truths, ſo obſervable in Children, and more or leſs in every Stage of Life, is in a great Meaſure to be attributed. Aſk many grown up Perſons (even of tolerable good Underſtanding in other Matters) the Meaning of ſome of the plaineſt Parts of the Catechiſm, and they will be at a Loſs to give you a ſenſible Anſwer. How ſhocking, how inexcuſable is this in a Chriſtian Country, and in a Proteſtant one too, where we have all the Means and Opportunities of Inſtruction that can be deſired, both public and private! and how apparently is it owing to this Neglect of Education in our younger Years! Many excellent Expoſitions of the Catechiſm have been publiſhed, and may be had at no great Expence: Some of theſe, therefore, you ſhould procure, in which your Miniſter, if you conſult him, will direct your Choice; as he will be always ready, I doubt not, to give you and your Children any further Inſtructions you ſhall deſire. As to the Time proper for firſt bringing them to Church, no general Rule can be laid down, becauſe their Capacities differ ſo greatly, and ſome are ſo much forwarder than others; but ſure I am, they ſhould never be brought thither, till they are fully inſtructed in the Nature of Prayer and public Worſhip, and are capable

of joining in it with their Hearts and Underſtandings, as well as with their Mouths. To take them to Church, as you would to any public Show or Spectacle, merely to gratify their Curioſity, and give them an Hour's Amuſement, is worſe than fooliſh; it is really wicked and profane: For what is the Conſequence? They not only diſturb all that are near them, but they contract an idle Habit of gaping and ſtaring about them, and behaving with great Indecency, which they are apt to retain ever after, even when they are grown up, and ſhould know better. Hence proceeds that ſcandalous Want of Attention and Devotion, ſo common in all our Places of religious Worſhip. To prevent this, you ſhould be very careful to inſtruct your Children, before you firſt take them to Church (and often to repeat thoſe Inſtructions afterwards) in the ſolemn and important Buſineſs they are going about, and to make them duly ſenſible of the great Honour and Privilege of being admitted into the Houſe of God. You ſhould alſo keep a watchful Eye over them while they are there, and commend or reprove them after they come home, according as they have deſerved. Above all Things you muſt ſet them an Example of Piety and Devotion in your own Behaviour at Church, for without that, all your Inſtructions and

Reproofs

Reproofs will ſignify Nothing. When they arrive at Years of Diſcretion (and this too differs greatly in different Children) and are thoroughly grounded in the Principles of Religion, you ſhould carry them to the Biſhop to be confirmed, but not till they have been firſt well inſtructed in the Nature of that Rite by the Miniſter of the Pariſh. But if no ſuch Opportunity offers, their not having been confirmed ſhould be no Hindrance to their being admitted at a proper Age to the holy Communion (which is of infinitely more Importance) as our Church allows and directs they ſhould be, ſo ſoon as they are "confirmed, or are *ready and deſirous* to be confirmed." And then, whenever you have an Opportunity of a Confirmation, you will be ſure to make Uſe of it.

In regard to their Preparation for the Sacrament, I have given my Sentiments on that Head ſo fully already, that I need not here repeat them. I would only obſerve further, that a very particular Care ſhould be taken to inform them as fully and clearly as poſſible in the Nature and Importance of that ſacred Ordinance, before their firſt Communion; and to ſee that their Behaviour at it be devout and proper. Shew them, from Scripture and Reaſon, the Obligations they all lie under to an early and frequent Performance of this

Duty,

Duty, and convince them of the many great Bleſſings and Benefits attending it. Make it, if poſſible, to be their Delight and Happineſs, as it is their Intereſt, to join in it; and never ſuffer them to harbour any fooliſh Fears or Scruples concerning it.

In a Word, endeavour, as much as you can, to keep up in their Minds a conſtant and lively Senſe of their Duty in general; and to ſee that their Behaviour be in all Things conformable thereto. Inſtruct them frequently and carefully in the holy Scriptures, which will make them *wiſe unto Salvation:* and admoniſh them, both by Precept and Example, to live *as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt.* And for your Encouragement in this good Work, remember the Words of *Solomon*, that if you thus TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO, WHEN HE IS OLD HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.

APPENDIX II.

A friendly Admonition to the Methodiſts.

BE not offended at my addreſſing you under the Title of Methodiſts, which I aſſure you, I do not mean as a Term of Reproach, but uſe it merely for Diſtinction's Sake, to point out the Perſons to whom I write,

write, and who are commonly (though perhaps improperly) called by that Name. As many of you have been famous for your conſtant Attendance on the holy Sacrament, I hope it may not be thought improper, at the Concluſion of a Treatiſe on that Subject, to praiſe and applaud you for the good Example you have ſet us in this Particular. Your Zeal too for the Doctrines of our holy Religion, and your Practice of many of it's Precepts, particularly the general Sobriety and Regularity of your Lives, are deſerving of much Commendation.

Yet, give me Leave to aſk you, or rather let me intreat you ſeriouſly to aſk your own Conſciences, if there is not one very material and eſſential Duty, in which you are greatly wanting. I mean, to uſe the Words of St. Paul, that of *endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* To which Purpoſe, you well know, there are many other plain and poſitive Injunctions in holy Writ. Or, in other Words, are not you guilty, to a very high Degree, of the Sin of Schiſm, or of cauſing Diviſions in the Church of Chriſt? a Sin ſeverely reproved by the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles, the Guilt of which no *human Laws* can remove or extenuate. Such of you, I mean more eſpecially, as have of late forſaken our public Worſhip,

and

and gone over to that of the Diſſenters? I would aſk too, whether the ſetting up a Tabernacle, or whatever you pleaſe to call it (for that is diſputing about Words) has not a very pernicious Tendency, in alienating the Minds of the People from the eſtabliſhed Worſhip and Miniſtry, which the Preachers there do not ſcruple to depreciate and aſperſe. Surely you, of all People, ſhould not deſert that Church, whoſe Doctrines you muſt allow to be perfectly agreeable to the Sacred Scriptures, for which you profeſs the higheſt Veneration. I ſpeak not of the Points in Debate between us and the Diſſenters, which are very trifling and immaterial, in Compariſon of thoſe *weightier* Matters of Faith, wherein, I truſt, we all agree. If our Sermons don't pleaſe you, (for that, I know, is made one Pretence for leaving us) will that juſtify your Separation from the more material Part of our Service, which is always the ſame, and to which, I am perſuaded, you can have no Objection? Our excellent Liturgy, you will not deny, to be a moſt complete Model of true Piety and Devotion. We may moſt eminently be ſaid to "read our Duty in our "Prayers." And what if every Sermon, or every Expreſſion in a Sermon, don't exactly hit your Fancy? Or rather, who made you Critics and Judges of the Miniſters of God's

God's Word? I am certain, that the worthy Man, who has for ſo many Years had the Care of this Pariſh, can give you no juſt Cauſe of Offence; He preaches true Chriſtianity—ſound orthodox Doctrine, and what is no leſs neceſſary, ſound Morality. I wiſh your Preachers would do the ſame, inſtead of always dwelling upon Points of Faith and Speculation, without taking any Pains to explain and enforce thoſe of Practice. How different in this Reſpect from our great Maſter, and his Apoſtles! Read their Diſcourſes and Epiſtles, and ſee how they conſtantly labour to inculcate every Precept of Morality, as well as to explain Matters of Faith. And as to Exhortations to Love, and Unity, and Concord among Chriſtians, the New Teſtament, you know, is full of them. May God give us all Grace ſeriouſly to attend to them, and in every Thing to regulate our Conduct thereby! And may we all join heartily and ſincerely in the following admirable Prayer of our Church!

A PRAYER FOR UNITY.

"O God! the Father of our Lord
"Jeſus Chriſt, our only Saviour,
"the Prince of Peace; give us Grace

"ſeri-

" ſeriouſly to lay to Heart the great Dan-
" gers we are in by our unhappy Divi-
" ſions. Take away all Hatred and Pre-
" judice, and whatever elſe may hinder
" us from godly Union and Concord,
" That as there is but one Body, and
" one Spirit, and one Hope of our Call-
" ing, one Lord, one Faith, one Bap-
" tiſm, one God and Father of us all;
" ſo we may henceforth be all of one
" Heart, and of one Soul, united in
" one holy Bond of Truth and Peace, of
" Faith and Charity, and may with one
" Mind and one Mouth glorify thee,
" through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen!"

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F I N I S.